12622 pp 7

THE

TWIN SISTERS;

OR, THE,

EFFECTS OF EDUCATION.

A NOVEL;

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

BY A LADY.

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THE TWIN-SISTERS.

LETTER LXXII.

Lady Eglington to Mrs Boothby.

GRANDBY is returned—and how returned! Oh my deareſt friend—where will our misfortunes terminate? and what will now become of my child? That fine mind overſet! Oh melancholy cataſtrophe! 'Twas always too highly wrought—too delicately turned—but I looked not for this.

We received the heart-rending intelligence firſt from our ſervants, who had it from his. The one who attended him in town and on the road, returned back immediately, declaring, were he to witneſs his maſter's affecting ways longer, they would drive him mad too. The man dates his firſt wanderings from the reception of a letter on his return from Oxford: and adds, that Mr. Grandby has ſcarcely ſlept an hour together ſince that time; but that, after ſitting or walking (with folded arms) in deep melancholy—not even anſwering when ſpoken to, he would ſuddenly

ſtart—exclaim, "Oh where ſhall I wander from this writing in my heart!" and then ruſh out of the houſe, nor return while he could ſtand.

Gracious Heaven! And have we cruelly imputed to him the wanderings of thoſe delirious moments, while he was only trying to fly from himſelf? My dear, dear Grandby! Oh that you were in a ſituation to forgive me! Mira—Mira only could do you juſtice. My heart is ſoftened, my friend—his failings ſeem all loſt in his misfortunes, and Grandby was never more beloved by me than at this moment. Can I then wonder at Mira? She does not now ſtrive againſt calamity, but ſits the picture of ſilent woe. Not even the departure of her Helena (who ſet off for London this morning) could affect her. The good girl, at the effect this new event has produced in her friend, wanted to poſtpone her journey—this Mira would not liſten to.

"Leave me, Helena," (ſaid ſhe) "I cannot now joy even in your preſence, and therefore do not wiſh for it. Leave me, Helena—to ſpeak is irkſome to me."

Mrs. Boothby—I feel inclined to give way too—can I ſtem thoſe torrents? Any thing elſe——My children—my children are the nerves that but to touch, is death to me. Sir Charles—Lord Sedley too, are deeply affected. His Lordſhip is impatient to ſee Grandby, but is confined by a ſevere cold.

He

He ſeems meditating ſomething—(Oh how he loves him!) but alas! what can now relieve him, or any of us!

Sir Charles is writing to Mr. Williams an account of the unhappy ſituation of his beloved relation. Medical advice (though I fear the malady lies beyond its reach) muſt by no means be neglected. Calling in a phyſician to his aid was once, when he was very ill, propoſed by the people about him; but the very idea threw him into a violent paſſion—and he aſked, could a phyſician take the burning letter from his heart? The ſight of him would kill me—and what could I do for him? Yet can I ſcarcely forbear flying to the dear creature I once——but he might not even know me, for at times his memory is gone, quite gone—I wiſh Sir George Lovemore were with him; how unlucky his abſence at this time! His influence might be of ſome ſervice during the intervals of recollection; but he probably knows nothing of his friend, and has, perhaps, already left the kingdom.

I muſt haſten to my poor girl, for I cannot bear her from my ſight a moment, though her dejection is death to me. We don't pretend to teaze her with advice or conſolation—Oh did you ſee the ſpeaking look ſhe caſts on her ſiſter and me as we hang on her, or ſit obſerving her at a diſtance! Sometimes, on thoſe occaſions, ſhe comes and ſeats her-

ſelf by one of us; and, without ſaying a word, leans on our boſoms—ſhe ſeems fond of this ſituation, as if inhaling ſome conſolation from the ſympathy ſhe knew within.

This morning, after thus reclining ſometime on Amelia, ſhe aſked—

"Do I tire you, my love?"

"Oh no! but what if you did? I ſhould mind nothing (preſſing her to her heart) if I could be ſo happy as to give you one moment's eaſe."

"Sweet ſiſter," (returned the other, kiſſing the twin-boſom of affection) "may Heaven add what it takes from my happineſs to yours, and I will not ſo regret its loſs."

Amelia replied only by a ſigh and the tear that fell on her ſiſter's face—Mira ſtarted—wiped it away—but others followed, and, for a while, they wept in each other's arms.

What then became of me! I flew to them ——claſped both, that ſeemed growing to my breaking heart.

Terrified by the agony in which they beheld me, they hung on my knees, each imploring me not to be concerned for her—but to be happy myſelf, nor let them deſtroy the repoſe of my life;——they would be cheerful—they would be any thing rather than thus afflict me.

Dear ſtreams of that life! I happy! I know repoſe while I ſee you both drooping like two united flowers before too warm a ſun? Oh no, no, no!

LETTER LXXIII.

Lord Sedley to Lord Elmour.

I WISHED to ſee Mr. Grandby—I have ſeen him, my Lord, and, while I live, the impreſſion he made will never be worn from my imagination. The man whom they believed ſo careleſs of his loſs, could not ſupport it and retain his ſenſes—Yes, my Lord, ſee now that Grandby, whoſe every look was intelligence, whoſe eye beamed genius, and whoſe breaſt was the ſeat of goodneſs, now wandering, deprived of reaſon, and, perhaps, unconſcious of the ſource of his deſpair!

All had heard, and were ſilently bewailing the ſad diſaſter, when Sir Charles begged Amelia to endeavour, by ſome lively air on the harpſichord, to diſſipate the gloom around her: he did not apply to Mira—How muſt ſhe feel the ſtabbing thought of cauſing ſuch accumulating woes to the poor youth ſhe loves! Good Heaven! I ſee her ſinking before my eyes, and cannot, cannot ſave her!

'Twas night—Amelia was yet playing, when a noiſe and confuſion in the hall drew our attention. The door ſuddenly opened, and Grandby appeared at the entrance. The ſervants had endeavoured to ruſh before him, to prepare the ladies for the ſight of woe, but, with quickened ſtep,

as fearing interruption, he prevented their intention.

He was dreſſed in a light hunting ſuit, and, though the weather was ſevere, his waiſtcoat was quite open at the boſom: his fine hair fell looſe down his back and ſhoulders, and ſtrayed in wild ringlets about his forehead—and he wore no hat. His face was pale and wan—his eyes now hollow, vacant, dead, their motion ſlow and heavy—now ſparkling with momentary lightnings, and wandering with moſt ſurpriſing quickneſs; and his whole figure, though greatly emaciated, was ſtill all elegance and grace. It was the lovely ſhadow of Grandby! He ſtopped at the entrance, his hands hanging careleſs at his ſides, and calmly ſurveyed every one round with ſeeming earneſtneſs, but without any particular attention to Mira.

I never ſaw ſuch an intereſting picture! All were ſtruck by a kind of awe, and, as fearing to diſturb him, locked their emotions in their boſoms. Mira, indeed, at his firſt appearance was ſpringing to him; but, recollecting, inſtead of his, haſtened to the arms of her ſiſter; ſometimes hiding her face from the diſtracting ſight, and then, unable to keep her eyes long away, again raiſing their trembling orbs to their deareſt object.

At length he broke the awful ſilence; but his voice, though ſoftened, had ſomething terrible in it! 'Twas ſolemn, plaintive, ſlow—and ſtruck on the heart as he ſpoke.

" Where

"Where is Sir Charles Eglington?" (Sir Charles approached him.) "How are you, Mr. Grandby? Will you not ſit down? Sit here by me."

"No: I can't ſtay. I come to aſk a favour of you; will you oblige me?"

"Certainly. Any thing in my power, Mr. Grandby."

"I am making my will; will you ſee it executed?"

Sir Charles either could, or knew not what to anſwer. Mira's now audible ſobs engaged his attention from the lively expectation his countenance expreſſed while his eyes continued fixed on Sir Charles for a reply. He went up to her, looked on her for a moment —then ſitting down, and raiſing her gently from her ſiſter, in a ſoothing voice, he aſked,

"Why do you weep? Do not turn away from me; lean on my boſom. Do I offend you? Oh its throbbing tenant, though an unfortunate, is yet an honeſt one. You are in affliction, and I would conſole you. Tell me, why do you weep?"

Mira attempted to ſpeak—the words died on her lips. Oh the looks ſhe caſt on him!

"Sweet creature!" (he continued, fondly ſtroking her arm, as he ſtill held her hand) "And does ſorrow already cloud your hours? Did any body write to you? and do you not know where to wander from the writing in your heart? Oh 'twas very, very cruel! But

do not weep—you ſee I do not ſhed a tear. I cannot ſhed tears, or I would weep with you your cruel diſappointment——but that letter, that letter ſtill burns in my boſom, and dries up all the fountains of my heart. I cannot recollect, or I would tell you how it was, for you ſeem compaſſionate and good: but I know it muſt ſoon conſume me, and that made me haſten every thing. So, Sir, promiſe me."

Then ſtarting away to Sir Charles, who held out his hand as he approached him, he repeated his requeſt.

Sir Charles thought it beſt to humour him; but added, 'twas time enough to think of thoſe things.

"Ah!" (he replied, laying his hand on his breaſt, and heaving up a ſigh from its very bottom) "you know not what is here! But this is not all! I have more to aſk of you——if I do not forget—my head" (preſſing his forehead) "is ſometimes very odd, and the ſparks deſtroy my memory. Oh—there is a young lady very nearly connected with me—but the *will* will inform you of every particular, for I made it at ſuch times as recollection moſt favoured me. Poor Sophia! what a life of woe has hers been! And her ſweet infant, my little Edmund——they have no friend in the world but me; and, when I am gone, deſerted by all, unleſs you befriend them, what additional ills may yet be their portion!

portion! My uncle may conteſt the affair" (for I have left them every thing, and they have a right to all I leave); "but Mr. Williams, becauſe I have loſt my memory, may queſtion the validity of the will; and, ſhould things turn againſt them, again the wretched mother and her helpleſs orphan may wander friendleſs through the world in want and miſery."

"They ſhall never want——they ſhall never ſuffer," (cried Sir Charles) "while I can prevent it. I will always take care of them."

"Why now God bleſs you!" (all animation—his eyes ſparkling with pleaſure;) "I heard you were good, and that encouraged me to try you. Are you not acquainted with Mr. Williams, and have you not ſome influence over him?'

"Yes, Grandby—is it poſſible? do you not recollect how well we are acquainted?"

"I thought ſo: now I wiſh you to exert that influence in favour of my rightful heirs; but ſay nothing of the matter till I am gone, and Heaven, Sir, reward and bleſs you for the deed! for the dear Sophia is as good as ſhe has ever been unfortunate. You will weep at her ſad ſtory——ſhe will inform you of every thing, for there will be no longer occaſion for ſecrecy. I would tell you myſelf, could I remember; but recollection always affects and ſets fire to my brain——

that I would avoid, for I have more to do; and the ſettling this affair ſo much to my ſatisfaction has already greatly relieved me. My head ſeems clearer, and my poor heart much lighter. Thank you, Sir."

Though Amelia had turned her chair round on Grandby's coming in, ſhe ſtill ſat cloſe to the harpſichord; and her arm, reſting on them, happened, by her motion, to ſound ſome of the keys. This took his attention.

"Are you fond of muſic?" (ſaid he) "it always ſweetly lulls me——do play for me—and if you ever ſing, do favour me with ſomething melancholy——ſomething very ſad—like the 'Maid in Bedlam,' or, 'You ſaid you lov'd me, Molly dear, Ah why did I believe!' Theſe are my favourites."

This was too much, my Lord—We could ſcarcely any one of us ſupport it: but Mira, I feared, would have fainted. Amelia was ſo affected, ſhe could not inſtantly comply: but Grandby's mind was now ſet on muſic, and his impatience lighting him up almoſt to anger at the delay, her father urged her to begin. The dear girl trembled as ſhe ſung a beautiful plaintive air. Grandby ſtood at a little diſtance, his eyes all the while fixed on the floor! and he continued in the ſame penſive attitude ſome moments after it was finiſhed; then cried,

"How delightful! how this ſooths my ſenſes to repoſe! 'Tis long ſince I felt ſuch

pleaſure

pleaſure—Oh I could liſten thus for ever! I often ſing to my own perturbed ſpirits—ſhall I ſing for you now? Hark! I am going to ſing you a ſong I made one dark ſtormy night as I ſat in Groſvenor-Square: but do not tell I was there—for I believe I was forbid to go near it: I promiſed not to do ſo, but often found myſelf there without ever intending it: ſo I ran away to avoid offending any more."

Then, my Lord, in a half-raiſed voice of the ſweeteſt woeful melody I ever heard, he ſung to equally plaintive ſtrains the following verſes:

I.

OH where's the morn with orient glories crown'd,
That lately promis'd me ſo bright a day!
Lo! as I gaz'd, night threw her mantle round,
And all the viſion glides in ſhow'rs away!
In vain I ſeek the proſpects once ſo fair,
And darkly wander, but I can't tell where.

II.

Oh where's the beauteous flow'r that on my breaſt
Shed its mild perfumes o'er my raptur'd ſoul!
As fondeſt love the bloſſom ſtill careſt,
Some dark myſterious pow'r my treaſure ſtole!

Oh

Oh give me back the darling of my care,
Or yet I wander, and I can't tell where!

III.

Now, o'er my youth impending ruins low'r,
And blaſt each roſy promiſe as it ſprings;
Lo! horror now ſits brooding on the hour,
Then, o'er my doom, triumphant claps her wings!
She calls—I follow, rob'd in black deſpair,
And wander—wander, but I can't tell where.

Judge my Lord, the impreſſion this left on our hearts—but Mira—I wonder how ſhe bore it at all! yet ſhe could not leave him, and the fear of being forced to it probably kept her up. Her grief again attracted his obſervation—and approaching her,

"Does that ſong increaſe your ſorrows? I wiſh I had not ſung it. Oh there is ſomething in the woe about you, that ſeems reſponſive to that which preſſes here! Will you not ſing for me too?"

She looked irreſolute—ſhe wiſhed, but doubted the power to oblige him.

"Do ſing for me."

She roſe as if inſpired by his wiſhes: new powers were lent her. I afterwards learned the air ſhe choſe had been one of Grandby's peculiar favourites. He had reſumed his ſtand—his eyes, as before, bent on the ground.

The

The inſtant ſhe ſtruck off the ſymphony he ſtarted as if aſtoniſhed, and gazed on her face with an earneſtneſs he had not done before; yet ſtill ſeemed not to know her. But when he heard her voice—good Heaven! what powers could paint the ſcene that followed! Again he ſtarted at the firſt ſounds, while amazement, terror, tenderneſs, fear, varied his features into all their forms. Then advancing two or three ſteps, and bending forward, after earneſtly examining her, he raiſed his eyes and claſped hands to heaven, and a violent trembling ſeized him.

Mira, engaged by her efforts to give him pleaſure, did not obſerve his emotion; and I fancy every one elſe, though greatly agitated, poſſeſſed the ſame ſentiment, that 'twas beſt to leave nature to her own operations.

Recollection was now ruſhing faſt upon him; but forcing it more, as it nearer approached, he ſeemed ſearching himſelf. His brows gathered to a ſtern frown, his head ſlowly moved, but his piercing eye remained fixed to the ſpot where firſt it reſted, and his whole aſpect was terrible to behold.

At length his doubts were ſatisfied: his features unbent, and a melancholy languor ſucceeded: but his trembling increaſed, while, with folded arms, he now contemplated Mira. The tender emotions, ſo long ſuppreſſed, ſoon roſe in his breaſt. The fountains, he believed dried up, were once more

more unlocked, and kindly ſwelled to his relief. Oh! how his oppreſſed boſom heaved! Convulſive motions ſhook his whole frame; but the tears, gliſtening in his eye, would not yet freely flow to his aid, till Lady Eglington called out all their ſprings.

She had ſilently wept the ſcene, but now, quite ſubdued by the agitated youth, all diſpleaſure vaniſhed, and the former Grandby, but Grandby in affliction—in calamity alone, poſſeſſed her mind. She roſe to go to him, but ſunk back on the ſofa, crying,

"Oh Grandby! My ſon—my ſon!"

He turned to her motion—her voice—flew to her—her arms opened to receive him, but he fell on his knees before her, and hiding his face in her lap, as ſhe hung over him weeping, tears guſhed from his eyes in torrents, and for many minutes he ſobbed out the tumultuous paſſions of his ſoul.

Mira, interrupted, left the harpſichord—Oh the ſtruggle in her boſom! Grandby before her in agony, diſtraction, and for her, and not haſten to his relief! She gazes on the proſtrate youth, but muſt no more—muſt not even bid him live, nor calm the keen ſenſations that dawning reaſon but nerved the more.

Amelia drew her ſiſter back to her ſeat, and, embracing each other, each bedewed with the ſweeteſt tears the boſom of the other.

Sir Charles and I were not indifferent ſpectators: he was not leſs moved than his Lady

—but

—but what could be done? To lighten the preſent ill by the moſt diſtant hope, would be but greater cruelty; had he not now confeſſed?

Almoſt exhauſted by the grateful vent that thus amazingly relieved him, he remained ſome time after he had ceaſed to weep, on his knees, kiſſing Lady Eglington's hands, and looking up in her face as imploring pity. At length, riſing up on one knee, he looked round—but ſeeing, and now recollecting me, the blood that ſeemed for ever to have fled his pallid face, ruſhed up and painted it vermillion. Then, with new phrenzy in his aſpect, he ſtruck his forehead violently, (as juſt finding out the whole myſtery,) and darting on Mira a look of blended anger, ſorrow, and deſpair, (his body bending to the hand that ſtill ſupported his head,) he wheeled out of the room, and was down ſtairs and out of the houſe in a moment. I underſtood, and as inſtantly purſued him. Miſs Eglington ſcreamed. What, Mira, could you fear? Would I not rather aim the ſteel to my own heart than to yours in Grandby?

It ſeems ſhe wiſhed to recal me, but her better-judging mother aſſured her there could be no danger from me, and that I probably thought it prudent ſome one ſhould ſee the wandering youth ſafe home, leſt in thoſe new tumults he might ſtray into real harm. He fled ſo faſt I could ſcarcely keep him in ſight, and ran acroſs the fields towards his own houſe;

houſe; but threw himſelf on a bank ſome diſtance from it, though it began to rain. I ſat down by him, and took his hand—'Twas dark.

"Who are you?"

"One who ſincerely loves you, Grandby."

"Loves me! I hate the ſounds—they have undone me. Sedley! Is it Sedley who purſues to inſult me!"

"I inſult you, Mr. Grandby! Oh if you knew how I ſuffer"——

"Leave me, my Lord; purſue your fortune, and leave me to mine. Mine will not bear mitigation; my ſoul indures not mediums: on this ſubject it can only riſe or fall true to the points of perfect bliſs or woe."

I knew not what to ſay to him, though I had been prevented ſeeking him by indiſpoſition only. Finding I would not leave him, he aroſe, and again fled before me. I overtook him at his own door, and entered after him.

"Dear Grandby, hear me."

He turned upon me ſternly, repeating the word *inſult*; and—ſomething like a threat eſcaped him. I cleared myſelf from the imputation with warmth.

"Well, well; perhaps in your ſtile 'tis *pity*" (with an ironical and ſcornful air); I have ſeen in ſome others, too, its operations this evening; but, however it comes arrayed from you all, it ſtrikes *inſult* only here" (ſlapping his breaſt with violence).

His

His eyes ſparkled ſo, I feared returning delirium; yet could not leave him.

You once had a more favourable opinion of me, Mr. Grandby: how have I offended you?"

"Offended me, my Lord! How poor a word! I am not offended, Sir" (careleſsly).

"Why then wiſh to avoid me? You did not treat me thus when"———

"And your Lordſhip would return the compliment? But Oh the difference! You found me in poſſeſſion of a heart you could not then deprive me of, and mine bled for your diſappointment, while it adored your generous conduct. But now that you have found means to rob me of my love, to root out all my proſperous hopes, to blaſt my youth, and (as I now begin to apprehend) to ſet my very reaſon tottering, you would draw a parallel between your former and my preſent ſituation, and thus affront me by a wretched imitation! Had then your expectations been warranted by returning love! by parental approbation! by faith! by honour! and by every ſacred tie, but the laſt! Go, my Lord, and triumph (if you can) in your noble victory: but remember—not to your unmanly deſigns, but to Miſs Eglington's commands, (Oh Mira! and could you, indeed, command it,) I reſign me."

"Good Heavens! Mr. Grandby— I rob you of your love! You know 'twas not my wiſhes

wiſhes interfered: how can you talk ſo wildly, though reaſon now"———

"Go on, my Lord; ſtab, ſtab me too with that dread reflection: tell me you ſee that reaſon on its verge, juſt hovering over me a moment ere it takes its everlaſting flight!"—And his arms extended upwards with his raiſed eyes, as if he ſaw it going, and implored its longer ſtay. My blood congealed within me at the idea of perhaps haſtening the awful period, by irritating him further: yet (however he came by it) could I leave ſuch an impreſſion on his mind without attempting to remove it?

"Dear Grandby, be compoſed—By Heaven I'd tear my heart from its roots but I would reach the deteſted baſe-born paſſion capable of ſuch reflection, did ſuch a one exiſt; or that could bear to add to your diſtreſs. Do, Grandby, believe me."

He was a little ſoftened—but looked doubtful, irreſolute: then——

"Tell me; did you not come down with the hope of obtaining Miſs Eglington's hand? Speak—ſay but the word—I know you won't deceive me. Perhaps I am miſtaken—perhaps ſome other—Did you, or did you not? Ha! if you heſitate"—

"If, after the prohibition, Mr. Grandby; if when no hope remained for you"——

"After! Nay, my Lord—but to make way for you or for ſome other, whence that prohibition? that fatal prohibition, ſo ſudden, ſo cruel? Dreadful! Oh 'tis here—'tis here!"

here!" —firſt laying his hand on his boſom, then his head, and, by his forgetfulneſs of the cauſe, I apprehended a relapſe. He continued—

"Lord Sedley, I never beheld a man I ſo wiſhed to call my friend when firſt I ſaw you, and again when we met in town; but I dared not aſk"——

I took the hand he had reſted on my arm as he ſpoke.

"Oh Grandby! and ſuch were my ſentiments for you; but prudence forbade my wiſhes, as delicacy did yours. You know not what I feel this moment for you."

"How can this be! Is there then another preferred to both? Tell me, my Lord; you muſt know the cauſe of my diſmiſſion. Anſwer me, I beſeech you, immediately. Perhaps" (and he ſighed) "I may ſoon be paſt your power of obliging me."

Alas! my Lord, I feared the time already come: his memory at leaſt muſt have already failed him; but wiſhing to humour him, I anſwered—"No; none."

"Then, Sedley, thou art the man! Yet you pretend to feel the thorns you yourſelf drive into my heart! Oh generous, generous Sedley!—But leave me, leave me, leave me" —(waving his hand for me to go, at each rapid repetition).

"Unkind Grandby! I repeat it—I encouraged not a hope till yours were no more. Alas!

Alas! even now I can have none! I would have died ere attempted to undermine you, and, had I been capable of ſuch baſeneſs, was ſucceſs likely to attend the mad deſign?"

"Strange all this! You had no hope till mine was no more! and even now have none —You would ſcorn to undermine me, yet no other—My Lord, ſpeak not to me in riddles: I am not clear enough for paradoxes: yet ſeek not to evade by puzzling me. Say, what was the cauſe of my diſmiſſion, when almoſt in poſſeſſion o the object without whom exiſtence is a curſe to me!

"Dear Grandby, diſtreſs me not by ſuch a queſtion, when you muſt know"—

"Know what! Did Sir Charles repent the having yielded his daughter to my inferior fortune?"

"Oh no."

"Did Mira, when I left her all my own, in one moment ceaſe to love me, prefer another, or, influenced by other attractions determine to await ſuperior offers?"

"No—no—no!"

"Then" (with an impaſſioned earneſtneſs that ſtartled me, for he really looked wild, he ſeized both my hands), "then, Sedley, by every ſacred power above, I conjure you tell me what it is!"

What could I do? What think? I had given my word to guard the ſecret; but he was fixed to the point, and too ſenſible for evaſion,

on, though loſt to recollection: yet, except on the ſubject that would have rendered the queſtion ſuperfluous, his memory ſeemed perfect; and, though raiſed, nothing of delirium appeared in any thing he ſaid.

"Diſtreſs me not thus, I beſeech you, Grandby: I know not particulars, but whatever was the cauſe—the impediment—ſure you cannot be ignorant of it: you will ſoon recollect"—

"My Lord," (bleſt be the Heaven that reſtores it at this moment,) "my memory is juſt now perfect as ever: I know not (but muſt now know it) of any cauſe, of any impediment—By the truth, the honour of my ſoul, I know of none!"

I ſtarted—he obſerved it.

"Ha! has my character been attacked? and have I been condemned unheard? Has dark aſſaſſination attempted my character, and no friendly hand raiſed to ward the blow till I was called to vindicate its worth! Oh Sedley—if, indeed, you ever loved, approved, pitied me, leave me not longer in ignorance"!

Was there ever, Elmour, a ſituation like mine? One moment I imputed all to madneſs; the next, ſenſe, honour, ſincerity, aſſerted all he ſaid. I was ſilent, not knowing how to act. He trembled with impatience; phrenzy began to dance again in his eyes. If not

not innocent, he ſurely believed himſelf ſo; for, had not conſcious worth ſupported him, how could the high-ſet, noble youth (with a dignity in his whole manner I never ſaw equalled,) thus have addreſſed me?

"Drive me not quite to madneſs, unworthy Sedley! How have I been miſtaken in you! Oh did you poſſeſs one ſpark of virtue, you could not add to my calamities, by inſinuations againſt my character you only confirm by this ungenerous ſilence, and then, by refuſing me an explanation, preclude all poſſibility of my obtaining for myſelf that juſtice which I might otherwiſe command. But you know nothing; and thoſe inſinuations are only maſks to conceal the bluſhes of your guilt: Oh! they but glare the more through the wretched, the poor diſguiſe. I upbraided you not—yet you purſue, but to deſtroy me more, and with the very hand that proffers friendſhip you plunge me further into wretchedneſs. Is it not enough you ſee me ſinking beneath my blaſted fortune, a willing prey to deſpair, and ſtruck by the ſevereſt blow that Heaven can let fall on me? Is this Lord Sedley! whom once I thought an honour to his birth! and more—an honour to humanity! How have the promiſes of your youth withered in the bloſſom! And for this, ſhall your race of anceſtors, who bending from their ſpheres, once delighted to behold your imitative

tative virtues, now ſtart back from your degeneracy, and mourn every blaſted hope! Nobility, diſgraced by you, whom ſhe prepared to boaſt a worthy ſupporter of her ancient arms, now from her awful creſt daſhes away your name, and drops a tear while for you ſhe bluſhes!"

This was rather too much, my Lord—But if innocence could ſcarce ſupport, what had become of me if guilty? I felt myſelf hurt; and though his ſituation, in every point of view, would have ſufficiently excuſed him; though ſo miſtaken, I reſpected his ſuperiority, and was awed by his virtues. He ſeemed, indeed, the very perſonage he deſcribed; for while his looks darted ſcorn on the ſuppoſed apoſtate, compaſſion and ſorrow ſoftened reproof and ſeverity. After mildly leading him in ſome degree from the error he had fallen into, he declared he could only be fully convinced by the requiſite explanation: but he had worked himſelf to ſuch elevated heights, that his imagination began to wander faſt, and though I could not venture for that and other reaſons to declare the whole; I confeſſed ſomething had really appeared againſt him, which I would endeavour to obtain permiſſion to inform him of to-morrow, would he be calm, and wait—Here he ſtarted off.

"Be calm and wait, while infamy may be hovering over, ready to cruſh me!"

"No,

" No' Grandby; the fault is not of ſo black a die, though alarming to delicate minds: candour is ever willing to ſoften the errors of youth, and even deception when evidently urged by love"—

" I guilty of faults that delicacy flies from! I give way to paſſion and diſſimulation! My Lord, I know not what your candour may allow; but I am of opinion, that the mind capable of wounding delicacy, and of deſcending to deception, would be guilty of any crime. But malice itſelf cannot reach me here. No, no! I ſee through the flimſy veil, or why was I not heard? Becauſe they dared not the trial. Oh Heavens! Could minds once ſo exalted, not ſatisfied with wronging me, deſcend to ſuch low, ſuch deſpicable artifice! But there they cannot hurt me, Yet I will vindicate—yes, I will have juſtice—Ha! From whom! From Mira's father! Oh God! my arm is tied, and the ſword drops from the raiſed hand of juſtice! Oh Mira! Mira! And is it you, who every way undo me! And thou (turning with fury on me) fell ruffian———Ah no! Yet leave me, Sedley——for Heaven's ſake leave me quickly—I am not myſelf—I cannot anſwer——Living fire is gathering round my heart! it mounts into my brain —See!—the ſparks!——how they kindle!

Oh

Oh that letter! that letter! It burns again—it will never be conſumed but with my life—The ſparks! the ſparks! See—ſee!—Oh where ſhall ſhall I fly from this writing in my heart?" And ruſhing out of the room, he ran up ſtairs, and left me transfixed to the ſpot with terror!

The ſparks indeed! they flaſhed from his eyes like lightning, and his countenance changed from livid to red at every ſentence. 'Twas horror to behold him! I heard, before I left the houſe, he had thrown himſelf on his bed. After charging the ſervants to watch him with care, (no need of charge—'tis plain they love too well to neglect him,) I returned with heavy heart, and regretting the zeal that had diſturbed the ſerenity he had before acquired by his viſit at Eglington-Hall. Yet would not his diſorder have returned with a ſenſe of the misfortune which firſt brought it on? Certainly; and unleſs the cauſe is removed, it will ſoon deſtroy his frame as well as intellects.

All gathered round on my return for information about Grandby—All reſentment was over, and Grandby—their dear Grandby, only was remembered. Mira—Oh how her eyes enquired of mine! Finding Sir Charles too ſtrongly fixed in his opinion to be ſhaken by a converſation he would only attribute to madneſs, or to continued deception, I dropped the deſign of aſking permiſſion to humour Grandby by the explanation he deſired. Can

he doubt the extent of their information? But if deception and art dwell with Grandby, never could candour and truth aſſume more ingenuous forms. Beſide, it may be long ere the dear unfortunate may attain the rationality with which he converſed this evening. I therefore took my reſolution: my next, my Lord, ſhall inform you of the reſult.

LETTER LXXIV.

Sir George Lovemore to Sir Charles Eglington.

OH Sir, forgive the mind that addreſſes you in its diſtraction, while its deareſt intereſts would moſt guard it before him whoſe favour it moſt wiſhes to deſerve. My friend! my Grandby—Oh Sir Charles, that mind, the pureſt reflection Heaven ever formed from its own image, is overthrown——is loſt for ever—But how! Oh wherefore was he drove to madneſs! Though, ſoft and ſenſible to their gentleſt touches, his heart was all delicacy and humanity; his reaſon was too firmly ſet, to well ſupported to be daſhed to ſuch ruin, but by one loſs I know he never could ſuſtain and live, unleſs 'twas owing to that hand to which his virtue would have bowed. For Heaven's ſake, Sir Charles, inform me what has happened—I have received ſuch letters—But Oh they ſhew me nothing but

but the heart-piercing effects of the tempeſt which has wrecked the nobleſt fabric that ever graced the world.

I am yet delayed from flying to my loved Grandby (how—how when I do, ſhall I ſupport the ſight!) by the reſpect due to the uninterred remains of my relation. Sir Charles ——I implore you to forgive me if I err—if I offend. Without intention of ill I have often ſtrayed from rectitude; and but for him who now no more can recal, can guide me, I had ſtill oftener wandered, and perhaps had never known the paths through which he led me. My reaſon was convinced—my heart, though unſettled, loved virtue—There wanted but the magnet to fix it to its point, and that now found——

Sir, I meant not at ſuch a time to have yielded to the impatience of my wiſhes; and my demerits yet feared your frown: but Grandby, whoſe ſituation would almoſt kill every paſſion in my breaſt but grief, Grandby's ſituation haſtens my reſolves, and diſſipates my ſcruples. I had determined to defer the declaration of my paſſion for Miſs Eglington till my friend's return to the country, flattering myſelf, from his recommendation, of a better reception. Not that I either expected or deſired that his friendſhip would be partial to my faults: no one felt them more than Grandby, and to feel and ſpeak, when called upon, were in him the ſame thing: but as he

knew they ſprung from folly more than from innate vice, and that my honour might be truſted, I hoped my future conduct might atone the paſt.

If, on my uncle's death, the expected addition to my fortune gave me pleaſure, 'twas that it rendered mine more worthy of being laid at Miſs Eglington's feet. If I regretted its loſs, 'twas the diſappointment of that deſire alone. My Lord had often haraſſed me with different lucrative propoſals, and his laſt will ran only in my favour on condition of my conſenting to marry a Lady whom I had never even ſeen. Had I been free, I could not have complied, except on acquaintance we approved each other; but not a doubt remained—my heart was already engaged. I immediately informed the executors of the impoſſibility of my acquieſcence, and at the ſame time wrote the lady the reaſon of my declining to urge her attention to my uncle's wiſhes. I had not diſpatched my letter when Grandby's laſt arrived, and by the ſame poſt another from a friend in town. One I had ſometime before received from Mr. Grandby, very wild and incoherent, ſurpriſed me, but this laſt could not be miſtaken; and my friend informed me in his letter, of the dreadful ſtate Mr. Grandby was reduced to, imploring me to haſten to his aid, his influence being ineffectual even to prevent his rambling wild about the ſtreets. Shocking intelligence!

No

No conſideration on earth had prevented my ſeeking inſtantly the dear wanderer in town; but he mentioned his intention of ſetting out directly for the country: I diſpatched an enquirer, and learned he was arrived. Among his own people, who adore him, he'll be ſafe till I can haſten to him. From the dark hints in his letter, his continuance in town, and my obſervations when I had the honour of viſiting at Eglinton-Hall, I ſaw ſomething had happened; but concluded a little difference only had ſeparated the lovers whom affection would ſoon unite again. But how was I miſtaken! And yet how inexplicable the cauſe that drove my too ſuſceptible friend to deſpair!

I have not a doubt of the continuance of Miſs Eglington's paſſion: ſhe could not ceaſe to love him if ſhe would: Grandby was formed to be beloved by ſuch a mind as hers; and thoſe who once regarded never could forget him. What then—Sir Charles, I claim indulgence—A report reached me not long ago, his uncle, on whom his greateſt expectation reſted, intended marrying. His own fortune is moderate, and even ſuch addition would leave it below that to which Miſs Eglington's entitles her. I know his diſtinguiſhed worth bore down all other conſideration, and you yielded your Mira to him who only could deſerve her. Though I have not heard the above report confirmed, it may be true—and,

with ſo inferior a fortune as Mr. Grandby's muſt then be, prudence and parental care may ſway even againſt your inclination, and my poor friend, for the firſt time, regret the want of riches.

Sir Charles—again forgive me if I err—but what elſe can—I have ſearched every poſſible reaſon: Miſs Eglington muſt love him: he dies for her—What then but this remains? Lord Sedley too—I ſaw him with my Grandby's Mira—If this then is the bar, liſten, Sir, with favour, while I endeavour to remove it. My own fortune is very great, and, but for this event, needed not addition. Oh let me ſhare it with my Grandby—my friend—the companion of my earlieſt youth—the monitor of my growing years—and ah, would you conſent to reſtore the nobleſt powers that ever adorned a man, and ſpread to univerſal good, yet—yet the guide of my future life. Divided, the poſſeſſions of each will ſtill exceed what Mr. Grandby's higheſt expectations would have reached, when you conſented to his wiſhes. Oh Sir! bleſs us both———Snatch the amiable youth, whoſe worth you once ſo diſtinguiſhed as to reward it with a promiſe of your Mira's hand, from the deſtruction which the withdrawing it now impends on him! Make me too the happieſt of men by granting me permiſſion to addreſs your other daughter, and if ſhe accepts my offered heart, Oh Sir Charles! what will our

lives

lives be, but the continued effuſions of gratitude and love! But if, for reaſons I preſume not to diſpute, we cannot both be bleſt, let my Grandby be happy—Oh reſtore him to himſelf, to me, and to a world he was born to benefit. I have no brother, nor any relation, who will ſuffer by the deed. I will immediately ſettle all my eſtate on my more than brother, or relation—on my friend—and—yes, Sir Charles—I will—I will comply with the dreadful conditions annexed to the will, and poſſeſs myſelf of my late uncle's, if the Lady, when ſhe knows the truth, will condeſend to honour with her hand the man whoſe gratitude and honour, her generous confidence will ever ſecure her own. Whatever becomes of me, the ſacrifice that preſerves my Grandby will render it of little moment —that is, in compariſon——My heart, however torn, cannot bleed more than at this inſtant.

If this laſt propoſal ſhould be the one that meets your preference, (but Oh, Sir! let it —let it, I implore you, be the firſt—ſave me too from deſpair!) I need not add how requiſite it will be, when you recal my friend to reaſon and repoſe, to conceal from him—Here I tremble at your frown: I know, Sir, your actions need not concealment, but here delicacy will prevail with you.

Favour me with your immediate anſwer; I have ſtopped all further progreſs till I re-

ceive it. My agony till then—Relieve me, deareſt Sir—Oh be my friend, my guardian, my preſerver! and ah that I dared to hope it, my parent too!——

LETTER LXXV.

Sir Charles Eglington to Sir George Lovemore.

MISTAKEN——generous young man! What have you written to me? Offended with you! No, Sir George—Your letter has rendered that impoſſible. Yet you have greatly erred, though no apology was needful. Had your unhappy friend made the ſame miſtake while reaſon directed his thoughts, I ſhould have cauſe to be offended, for he ſhould know me better; but Sir George Lovemore is a ſtranger to me, and to my ſentiments. Yet it is wonderful you ſhould hit on ſuch a motive as that you mention to influence my conduct, when, had you *properly ſearched*, a better might have occurred.

That a heart capable of ſuch noble feelings, a mind endowed with ſuch exalted principles of fortitude and worth, ſhould ſo lightly weigh realities, that they eſcape even ſearching recollection while tormenting itſelf with ærial ſuppoſitions below its eſtimation! The report of Mr. Williams's intended marriage never reached me, nor do I believe he ever had

ſuch

ſuch an idea. Sir George Lovemore, had Mr. Grandby been deprived of not only every expectation of the kind, but of all he himſelf inherited, and but poſſeſſed that virtue whoſe reſemblance I once ſo adored in him, ſuch loſſes had retained no other power over me, but to draw him nearer to my heart. Did the narrowneſs of my daughters fortunes render prudential conſiderations requiſite, parental care would certainly direct otherwiſe; but, enlarged as they are, no additions are neceſſary to their happineſs: if, with leſs than they will poſſeſs, they know not to be happy, empires will not make them ſo.

Reſt aſſured, Sir, that my objections to Mr. Grandby are fixed on the ſtrongeſt and moſt certain baſis. My reaſons are ſubſtantial, and cannot be overthrown even by the amiable qualities he yet poſſeſſes; the calamity that ſhivers my heart but to think of; the perſuaſive voice of the nobleſt friendſhip I ever knew, and ſo revere; nor yet by the ſituation of my child—that child, the pride, the treaſure of my life! The ſacrifice to honour! Yes; you are right—Mira loves your friend—ſhe never can forget him. Convinced herſelf of the propriety, ſhe readily reſigned what ſhe could not with innocence retain. 'Twas hard even to her to do ſo, but yet ſhe would have conquered, had not this fatal proof of the affection that tempted him to ſwerve from his natural diſpoſitions, too keenly wounded

a ſenſibility now ſinking beneath the ſhock. Sir George, I ſee this child—the wonder of her ſex, and pattern of all that can adorn it, hourly ſhaking off all that ſhe has of mortal, and riſing to her kindred ſpheres.—Take her, Heaven! but take her as you gave her—I reſign her, and reſign her the ſpotleſs innocence ſhe was when I received her!

You bid me ſave your Grandby: were I to ſave the lives of both by uniting them, would they yet be happy? Oh no!—Grandby, tho' blinded by paſſion, is not quite callous; and both have hearts that could not, under ſuch circumſtance, allow them to be happy. They cannot then be ſo on earth—Oh bleſs them, Heaven, in thy manſions of repoſe! Forgive the miſtakes of impetuous youth—let his ſufferings atone his guilt; and ſince I cannot here unite my children, do thou unite them there for ever!

And now, Sir George, of my other daughter—my ſecond Mira, and, I fear me, ſoon my only conſolation. I ſhall not apologize where I ought to be ſincere; nor can you be offended where the good of her you love is at ſtake. I have been obliged to you, Sir—how greatly obliged! But what were the motives that ſo heightened my gratitude? The good—the happineſs of my child! That worthy action ſtands fair in your character. When I ſaw you, heard you, and when I obſerved the diſtinction with which you honoured Miſs Eglington,

Eglington, I regretted you had not by chance met, and reſcued her from a ſtranger: I regretted too, that ſuch connections, and the crime to which they were leading you, were not the only ſpots that ſhaded the bright qualities and virtues you were ſo diſtinguiſhed by. But if that action, thoſe advantages, raiſed you in my eſtimation, (notwithſtanding the greater reprehenſion due to their abuſe,) your letter bore every thing before it;—and your ſacrifice to love—your ſacrifice to friendſhip —your *propoſals*, moſt excellent young man, like the meridian ſun, overpowered the ſplendour of every other light, and every ſhade fled away.

Oh why ſhould minds ſo allied by every virtue be ever deceived into vice? Wretched habits! Illuſive influences! What had you with theſe? and how have you prevented the fondeſt wiſhes of my heart, that could otherwiſe have taken thoſe youths to my boſom, to have ſhared it with my girls—all equally the children of my love!

Sir George, I cannot give you my daughter, nor yet can I refuſe her. You ſay your reaſon is convinced, and you think yourſelf already in the paths it points to—I will give you a clue to judge by; and, when certainly arrived, then aſk Amelia, and if ſhe ſees you with her father's eyes, Sir George, that moment ſhe is yours. Attend—When, without any neceſſity of *ſearching*, vice, inſtead of eſcaping

ing the moſt vigilant *enquiry*, no longer concealed by the careleſs eſtimation from inſtant notice, ſhall (uncoloured by deluſion) through a purer medium glare on the mind, that, ſo far from wondering at the horror it produces in another, ſtarts at the deformity it before careſſed; then, Sir George Lovemore, I repeat, and not till then, my Amelia ſhall be yours.

LETTER LXXVI.

Sir George Lovemore to Sir Charles Eglington.

YOU refuſe her not to me! A thouſand bleſſings on you for that word! Oh why are the ſweeteſt tidings, (for you give me hope, and I will conquer every monſter in my way,) why are the ſweeteſt tidings my heart ever received, daſhed by a cenſure on him who never merited but approbation in its moſt unqualified, unlimited acceptance? Sir Charles, with joy, with gratitude I receive the proffered conditions, and begin my progreſs to virtue and to truth, by declaring, by their moſt ſacred powers, that Grandby never ſwerved from either. Sir, you have been deceived—for, if ever virtue illumined a human mind by its celeſtial rays, 'twas his: if ever honour without a ſpot to ſhade its purity, inhabited a breaſt, 'twas his: and if ſincerity

and.

and candour ever adorned a character not malice in its moſt infernal forms can ſully, it was my Grandby's! Do not I know him? From infancy have I not known each action of his life? And from the liſping accents of affection his earlieſt dawn of goodneſs called from the youths around him, to the manhood which extorted tributes of applauſe from all that underſtood his worth, have any of his actions deſerved reproach, or cenſure? Oh had I but liſtened oftener to my Grandby, I ſhould not now have to regret my happineſs defered; no probation had now been neceſſary; and, had not his irreſiſtible perſuaſion influenced me, all hope might now be ſhut out from me.

And not only the friend he loved benefitted by his example and admonition; many an unwary youth he led back from precipices they had never but for him eſcaped, while the moſt hardened tried to conceal themſelves from his detection, and bluſhed before the correcting boy, more than before the ſevereſt cenſures of ſuperior authority and years. And this is the man, theſe are the matured perfections calumny has attacked, and detraction ruined! Ah, what avail they, if in the face of day 'tis in the power of a ruffian's breath to hurl them to ſuch deſtruction! Oh, if Grandby is to be thus rewarded, let me too aſk, "Virtue, what art thou but a name!"

Sir Charles, you honour me with an opinion that thrills rapture through my heart—

For

For empires I would not riſque one of your favourable ſentiments, and my very being depends on my increaſing them. Would I venture, were I capable, at deceiving you! Upon my ſoul, then, Grandby is innocent of any thing laid to his charge that could produce ſuch ſerious conſequences. I cannot miſunderſtand you, Sir: I will ſeek—I will find the deception, but not in Grandby's boſom. Heaven forbid my happineſs ſhould be deferred until I find it there. Well might I ſearch for ages and not attain the myſtery—it is not to be found but in the wretch's heart who invented the impious falſehood. There I will reach it, and, wherever darkly concealed, purſue, and drag him to light and vengeance.

But in the interim he is loſt—perhaps beyond recal——Sir Charles, in time, if poſſible, prevent—You know not what you do —Lay not up——I beſeech you, lay not up for yourſelf, through miſtaken motives, remorſe that may ſoon rend your heart in pieces. Oh what will that goodneſs, that benignity, which I adored as I read their dictates, ſuffer, when your Grandby's innocence appears too late to ſave him? when you behold the devoted victim of your miſguided ſuſpicions borne before you to his haſtened grave, while all the reparation in your power will be to lay his Mira by him. The blood leaves my heart —What then will vengeance avail me?

Sir

Sir Charles—Sir Charles, reſtore me my friend, or—even the bleſſing you hold out to me will ſicken in my heart.

Oh Grandby! thou deareſt treaſure of my ſoul—if I loſe thee—and looſe thee thus—but I fly to thy injured boſom, and while I fold thee to mine (you never pained it before), perhaps even thy Lovemore's image is deſtroyed in it, and friendſhip itſelf fled with every other divine emanation that ſhed perpetual ſtreams of philanthropy and goodneſs wherever you appeared.

I ſhall then, Sir, throw myſelf at your feet, and thank you (if words can expreſs my ſenſe of them) for the obligations I feel. But you muſt give me a better clue—Only point the way to the daring aſſaſſin, and the monſter ſhall live but to own his blaſphemy. I have thought of Lady Priſcilla—but nothing that came from her would be attended to: ſhe loved Mr. Grandby, and love, in a breaſt like hers, might eaſily turn to hatred and revenge, when contemned as it deſerved. Grandby had rivals too—though too much fools and coxcombs to plan ſuch a plot as this themſelves; yet any tool in ſuch a woman's hand might murder. That Heaven may give him to my juſtice!

LETTER LXXVII

Lord Sedley to Lord Elmour.

IN my laſt, I hinted ſomething of a reſolution I had formed—I will now acquaint your Lordſhip with its conſequences.

The morning after my interview with Mr. Grandby, I went to enquire for him, and learned tho' he had not undreſſed the preceding night, he had yet ſlept better than on any other ſince his return to the country: and that on awaking, he ſeemed perfectly clear, compoſed, and rational. He had ordered his ſervant to prepare for a long journey, obſerving this part of the world was a very improper one for him—" the very worſt he could have choſen—what could poſſeſs him to return?"

Convincing the man I meant his maſter well, I engaged him ſtill to make pretences for delay, till he heard further from me, or until the arrival of his uncle.

I left the houſe without having ſeen Grandby, and ſoon after Eglington-hall—and Mira. Your Lordſhip will probably gueſs my intended rout: yes—Sophia herſelf muſt ſatisfy my doubts: Sophia only can—and I purſued my way to Oxford.

You have heard of Mrs. O'Shaughneſſy, my Lord—and will not think a further account of her impertinent.

She

She looked ſuſpicious on my earneſt enquiries about Mrs. Willows: judging it beſt to gratify her curioſity (a little) as the readieſt way to her confidence, I acknowledged the higheſt intereſt in the concerns of Mr. Grandby, and of that lady.

" Then, Sir, you will be concerned to hear that Mr. Grandby is a villain, and that lady an angel: for were he not a villain, he would never come to leave her to ſtarve (after forſaking her too, and in this ſtrange country) and were ſhe not an angel, ſhe would not prefer ſtarving to death every day of her life to living a fine lady. Why, 'twas but laſt week a young gentleman—between ourſelves a very handſome one too, and rich as the ſeas; but no matter for his name.—When we ſpeaks ſcandal, tho' ever ſo true, of our neighbours (God bleſs them all) good chriſtians ſhould mention no names. Why then, as you live, finding his friend there, t'other fine ſpark had done caring at all about her; he ſends her fifty guineas all in paper money: yet deuce a bit would ſhe touch one, but ſent the dirty traſh back the very way it came—devil fly away with it. And ſo Sir George Lovemore, and all ſuch jackanapes; and you too, Sir, if you errand (begging your honour's pardon) ſhould be after driving that way, may ſpare all further trouble: for tho' the lady might be once (between ourſelves) no better than ſhe ſhould be; ſhe is now about

reforming

reforming an honeſt woman, and takes in work for herſelf and her ſweet baby (bleſs the pet!) and no diſparagement neither.—The flowers in May are not more fragrant than the wonderful works of nature, ſhe borders and paints in a thouſand pretty vagaries." All attempts to interrupt her were vain, till hearing the maid with the child in the paſſage, the good creature ran out (her eyes filling with affection) to "catch one kiſs before it went out to fetch the air."—There Sir, preſenting it to me as I followed her to the door) what would you give for a look now, not to ſpoil your longing? There's fleſh and blood—there's freſh and fair as the bleſſed morning. Now own if you ever ſaw ſuch another doating-piece in all your born days! Oh then foul befal the man that would let you want, my darling pet! But while I have in the world, you ſhall never know the curſe of poverty: and you ſhall be unto me like my own poor boys, who died for honour and the king (God help him) only Heaven grant you may never come to ſuch another end, nor die in a bed of honour. She almoſt ſtifled the poor child with careſſes as ſhe ran on, her worthy heart ſwelling with its own benignity, and 'twas long ere I could be allowed a ſhare of the "darling pet!"

But ah, my Lord! had millions depended on the queſtion, nature had here ſet a mark that could not be diſproved. Here Grandby's features

features were perfectly pourtrayed, and here were varied all the lively graces of his countenance.

I now ſent up my name, importing I came from Mr. Grandby, and was inſtantly admitted to one of the loveliеſt young creatures I had ever beheld—and lovelier, my Lord, from the ſoftening touches of a gentle melancholy tracing over the beauties of her face, and mingling with the languid graces of her form. For the firſt time my heart condemned Grandby—the latter part of her ſufferings had not been his own: with all the forgetfulneſs of his preſent ſituation, he had intended her all the juſtice now within his power, by the will he deſigned in her favour: But how could he who once had loved Sophia—not even Mira—indeed, my Lord, not even Mira could excuſe him to me.

" From Mr. Grandby, (ſhe exclaimed on my uſing his name) and does he then at length recollect me! but how much more wonderful he ſhould ever have neglected—What am I ſaying? you are a ſtranger to me, Sir; yet your looks are ſo kind—they declare a knowledge of my griefs.

" I do indeed, Madam, moſt ſenſibly feel them, tho' all the particulars—

" Pardon me, Sir (colouring) but by your manner—and your naming Mr. Grandby—have you any meſſage for me from him, Sir?" I was ſilent—" I underſtood—I really thought you a particular friend, well acquainted—

" I am

" I am not altogether a ſtranger to your ſtory, Madam: Mr. Grandby has partly revealed—

" Ah, Sir, what occaſion now for concealment? What can I have now to dread from detection? or to apprehend from reſentment? The meaſure of my woes is full; and cenſure itſelf, once my greateſt terror, now dies away before greater ills—Yet my child—for his ſake I could have wiſhed his mother's fame as ſpotleſs as her heart: but ſatisfied of its innocence, I muſt leave the reſt to Heaven." And, my Lord, were innocence deſcending from the ſkies, ſhe would appear in ſuch a form, and reveal her angelic purity thro' eyes, artleſs as thoſe from which I wiped away the tears, while I ſoothed, and endeavoured to convince her I wiſhed to gain her confidence, only to prove myſelf her friend. She ſaid ſhe knew my character; and that on hearing my name, ſhe haſtened to receive me: Mr. Grandby having mentioned me to her in terms of the higheſt affection and reſpect; and the part I now took in her afflictions, convinced her of the truth of all he had ſpoken. I urged her to reveal the particulars of thoſe woes to me—She conſented; and with a ſweet ingenuouſneſs confeſſed an intereſt beyond the mere gratification of my curioſity, however tenderly excited. " Her child—ſince Mr. Grandby had indeed quite caſt him off—perhaps when her poor little Edmund

loſt

loſt (as ſoon he muſt) his mother too—yes, her heart, do what ſhe could to prevent it, would break—perhaps then—compaſſion then might ſway me: wherefore ſhould ſhe heſitate? Shame ought not to prevent her endeavouring her child's future good:—yet ſhe owned ſhe *did* feel aſhamed—ſhe could not help it."—My Lord, her heart ſeemed already breaking, and ſhame *did* tinge the paleneſs of her face, with the bluſhes of a delicate confuſion, as ſhe ſolicited my protection for her little Edmund. I was obliged to uſe ſome evaſion in my aſſurances—Why promiſe ſervices I knew there would be no occaſion for? Yet I did not chuſe to let her know of Grandby's unhappy ſituation, in conſequence of mentioning the will.

She at length became more compoſed; and I will attempt, my Lord, in leading you thro' the difficulties this hapleſs girl experienced, the ſame native ſimplicity with which ſhe now related them to me.

"The little narrative of the poor Sophia, my Lord, can contain nothing worthy your attention, except what it ſhall owe to the goodneſs of a heart, benevolent as your's. Of my mother, I know nothing—over my birth was thrown a veil ſo myſtically woven, that all the future events of my life ſeem ſtill to partake of its obſcurity. I am ignorant too of the place where firſt I ſaw the light.—My father, a captain in the Eaſt-India ſervice (whoſe

whoſe name was Beavour) fearing to return to England, and face the cenſure and reſentment of the company, whoſe ſhip he had loſt by ſome miſmanagement, (and 'twas at firſt believed he himſelf had periſhed with her) ſettled in India, and after my mother's death, married a native of that country, a woman who highly valued herſelf on the ſuperiority of her rank and fortune. This lady finding her huſband loved me more than any of the children ſhe had brought him, grew ſo jealous of his affection, that from my infancy ſhe conceived the greateſt diſlike to me—more, quite an abhorrence, my Lord; and this ſhe imputed only to the ſuperior fairneſs of my complexion, which ſhe declared diſguſted her, for I did every thing I could to pleaſe her, and dearly loved my little black brothers and ſiſters. Her behaviour, however, rather made my father more and more attentive to me, as it further engaged his compaſſion. He would often, as he preſſed me to his heart, call me 'babe of affliction—child of his pity—of his juſtice too:' and at times (the reaſon of which I could never comprehend) the 'child of his deep contrition.' I would then aſk him of my mother; of the place of my nativity—but on any queſtions that looked backward, he would weep, and intreat me to ſpare him, and deſiſt; ever declaring he hated recollection.

" He took great pains with my education, and obtained for me an Engliſh governeſs, who

who alſo ſeemed to compaſſionate, and delighted to inſtruct me. But now his health declined daily—and as he ſeemed pleaſed with my attentions, he uſed to ſay, while his eyes ſwam in tears—'Sophia, I would not loſe you till the laſt—yet you muſt not ſtay too long, nor I be too long ſelfiſh.' At length Nature ſeemed quite exhauſted—My poor father had long addicted himſelf to opium: pernicious habit! but he found in its effects a temporary relief from recollection. The poiſonous doſes were hourly increaſed in quantity, and his diſſolution approached.

"He had now ſeveral interviews with a Captain Lane—a former friend; and one day in his preſence called me to him, while, with the laſt embrace, he cried—'Sophia, I am going, and muſt no longer defer, leſt death ſhould arreſt my care of thee. I cannot die in peace till aſſured of your ſafety from the dreaded machinations of this wicked woman, by whoſe hatred and malice I know, not only your happineſs, but your life would be endangered, when I am not near to guard it and protect you. You muſt depart, my child—inſtantly depart for England—and the God of Mercies ſtill go with thee, thou fated offspring of the waves—of tempeſts—and of death! All is prepared (he continued, as I liſtened appalled by his fearful words) I have already taken your paſſage with this, my friend, Captain Lane: he will be your guardian till, with this

this pacquet, he delivers you to Mr. Williams, with whom he is well acquainted. And, Sir, as you give them to his hand and boſom, tell him his foe, his former moſt inveterate foe, with his laſt breath, in recompence for all the injury he did him, bequeaths him all his treaſure—bequeaths him his child—his daughter—a recompence indeed! and, for the reſt, the God of Mercies bleſs thee thou child of love, revenge, and reſtitution; the God of Mercies bleſs thee! He trembled—he fainted, as by his deſire Captain Lane, and the woman who was to attend, drew me away, in order to conduct me to the port where the veſſel waited ready to ſail.

O how I wept! but, my Lord, I was born to tears—and will hurry from this part of my ſtory, to that of our arrival in England, during which period nothing very material occured, unleſs I may deem the loſs of my pacquet a matter of ſome conſequence to me: a queſtion however which after circumſtances leave in doubt.

Being ſuddenly chaſed by a French veſſel of ſuperior force, Captain Lane intending to throw over board ſome papers he did not wiſh ſhould be inſpected, ſeized, by miſtake, my letters in his panic, and toſſed them in the waves; without the leaſt occaſion too for either—an Engliſh firſt-rate juſt then appearing, Monſieur ſheered off with nothing to boaſt, but the loſs of my poor pacquet.

Captain

Captain Lane now attempted to comfort me by endeavouring to leſſen the evil: he ſaid he was well acquainted with Mr. Williams—" a very benevolent good kind of man, tho' a little whimſical in his manner at times, to be ſure: he was very certain tho', he would take his word any day for a thouſand pounds, and he would add his oath too for my ſervice, if neceſſary. He was poſitive the papers contained nothing but a duplicate of my father's laſt farewell ſpeech, which he could, and would repeat, word for word—and my ſervant ſhould vouch for them, if needful."

Too young, too lively, and too thoughtleſs to ſuffer any thing to make a long impreſſion on me, I was willing to be pacified; and ſhortly after, all extacy at the ſight, I hailed the Engliſh ſhore—a ſcene indeed of novelty and wonder, but ſoon to change to one of ſorrow, tracing ſorrow!

All that could do ſo, were now getting on ſhore; but I, much againſt my inclination, was obliged to wait the Captain's going.

The Purſer, on his return to the ſhip, informed us he had, as deſired, enquired out Mr. Williams, who then happened to be in London; and had commiſſioned a friend to let that gentleman know that a young lady, with recommedations to him, had juſt arrived from Bengal in the Proteus. In conſequence of this intelligence, Captain Lane ſoon re-

ceived an equally polite and friendly note, importing, "tho' Mr. Williams was yet ignorant of the lady who had letters for him, 'twas enough ſhe was recommended by any one of his old friends or connections in India, to command his utmoſt ſervices; and he would wait on Captain Lane, and receive her from him, the moment he heard of his arrival in town."

All life and ſpirits on firſt entering the harbour, I had incautiouſly (tho' I experienced a very ſevere change in the climate) expoſed myſelf upon deck to the evening air, and fearing confinement would be the reſult of complaining, I ſuffered a ſore throat to gain ſuch an aſcendency, that I could ſcarcely ſupport the journey to town; and as ſoon as arrived at Captain Lane's lodgings (whoſe family lived in the country) I was obliged to go to bed, where a fever confined me for ſeveral days.

Mr. Williams, accompanied by a young gentleman, his relation, called that very evening, and I greatly regretted my inability to pay him my reſpects: perhaps 'twas beſt ſo; for ſure the repetition of what paſſed was ſufficiently terrible; and can I ever forget the ſtrange dialogue that enſued, or poſſibly account for an antipathy that could ſo ſuddenly overcome a philanthropy, not leſs ſtrange in its manner, than extenſive in its ſway?

Mr.

Mr. Williams, on his very entrance, enquired for " his little girl—his pretty Indian " ward"—and diſcovered the higheſt concern and diſappointment at learning I was too much indiſpoſed to ſee him. He deſired a phyſician might be inſtantly ſent for; nor till aſſured of my being attended to with the greateſt care, did he diſcover the leaſt curioſity to know who I was, as though he had been equally the guardian of all the children of his eaſtern friends. But he now aſked for his letters, and enquired my name. Captain Lane, with many apologies and expreſſions of ſorrow for the unfortunate event of his haſty careleſsneſs, related the accident—" Ha! that's a bad affair, tho': who can tell what particular orders the letters contained about the girl? but come, we'll do our beſt—what can't be cured, muſt be endured—never fret, Lane, (ſeeing him uneaſy,) 'twas well 'twas no worſe: only a little paper, I ſuppoſe: better that go to the bottom than the company's ſhip, man, not to mention nearer harms, hey! Her father muſt ſcribble again, that's all."

" Alas! Sir, (returned Captain Lane,) I apprehend that to be impoſſible: we have reaſon to believe his very laſt breath was exhauſted in the delivery of his meſſage to you, and parting bleſſing on his daughter."

" Eh! laſt breath! that's the worſt part of the buſineſs yet. No remedy for that. His

parting bleſſing!—child! ſhe ſhall not want a father tho'. His meſſage to me!—to take care of his girl no doubt—I will, I will: dear lamb! never fear. Dead! who knows but 'twas honeſt Sam Field—or George Elves—or—but who the devil was it?" Captain Lane, now calling in the woman to witneſs, repeated, as he had declared he would, word for word, my father's dying ſpeech. Mr. Williams's face betrayed, as he eagerly liſtened, a medley of paſſions;—at length they broke out into more ſhort and broken ſentences, his uſual method of expreſſion whenever ſtrongly affected. "Poor man! my foe! I did not want for them; but we muſt forget and forgive.—I never had but one I could wiſh at the devil, and the devil picked his bones long ago. Child of the waves! hatched at ſea I ſuppoſe —poor thing! God ſend thee Halcyon days —of tempeſts!—death!—raving, raving, poor man! all his treaſure!—a good child's a treaſure to be ſure. Well, well: I accept his legacy, and ſhall ſee what's to be done when ſhe's well. We'll put her to a boarding-ſchool—teach her to caper, and ſay *oui Monſieur*, and then get her a huſband."

Captain Lane ſmiled—but obſerved, "tho' rather too young for the one, Miſs Beavour was too old for the other; and had already received a very pretty education." Mr. Williams now fairly ſtarted off his legs, as he exclaimed:—

"Beavour?

" Beavour! egh! Beavour! D—n—yes, Hell's in the name—the ſound!"—and he ran on beyond my powers of following, till recovering himſelf a little, he made ſome further enquiries, and found my father had been the identical Captain Beavour, from whom he had formerly received ſome injury, and whom he had long ſince ſuppoſed no more. Then raging out again, as he ſnatched up his hat to fly the houſe that but contained ought of the wretch, whom, though it ſeems he had purſued, his vengeance could never before overtake.

" The hardened monſter, (he cry'd,) and do his inſults continue beyond the grave! and now—and now—leſt 'twere poſſible I could forget, did he take this method to remind me of my wrongs, when 'tis not in my power to revenge them! Oh, that inſtead of a miſerable girl, below my loweſt pity and contempt, 'twere he!—'twere he!"—Stamping half frantic with paſſion as he ſpoke.

" Good God! (cry'd Captain Lane,) what can this mean! what fatal miſtake!—Oh, the poor Sophia! and is this the reception ſhe meets on her firſt entrance into a ſtrange world, from the man to whom a dying father had entruſted her!"

" Sophia! Sophia! (echoed Mr. Williams) Mercy! mercy! Tyrant!—barbarous tyrant!" —and out he ruſhed, without waiting for his nephew, who, with Captain Lane and my

maid, continued for ſome time looking on one another in ſilent amaze, as each were expecting an explanation of ſuch ſtrange and myſterious proceedings.

At length, after much deliberation, vague ſuppoſition, and expreſſion of the utmoſt aſtoniſhment at my father's conduct, in conſigning me to the charge of one, whom (by his own confeſſion) he knew to have ſtrong reaſons, whatever they were, for his prejudices, they ſeparated;—Mr. Grandby promiſing to urge his uncle to an explanation, and, if poſſible, (when he cooled a little after his violent ſurpriſe,) to grant the expected protection: and Capt. Lane declaring, ſhould he fail, and Mr. Williams perſiſted in his whimſical prejudices (as he ever ſtyled his behaviour to me, he would endeavour to find out ſome of my father's relations in England, who would certainly receive me, as they were doubtleſs the natural and propereſt guardians of an orphan daughter of their family. Mr. Grandby, on taking leave, recommended the greateſt tenderneſs in breaking to me ſo diſtreſſing and mortifying a diſappointment; but the good Captain Lane vowed he would not for the world let me know a word of the matter till I was better able to bear it, enjoining my maid to keep the ſecret.

But, alas! the poor Diana had already too long ſuppreſſed her affliction, and terror at the probably coming cares of her loved young

Miſsè.

Miſsè. The inſtant ſhe approached the bed-ſide, her face (had ſhe been ſilent) had betrayed the whole; but ſhe now ſobb'd out her grief, and wrung her hands—"Her poor dear *Miſsè*! What would now become of her ſweet little *Miſsè*! Why, why, (ſhe aſked) did we leave our own good fine country, to come to ſuch a ſorry one as this? One where the ſun never came for an hour, but he looked ſick, and was glad to go back again."

Diana's extravagancies had however this good effect—they obliged me to exert myſelf, much as I felt, and was affected as ſhe continued to pour out her lamentations, and intelligence together. Had ſhe attempted to ſoften things, my own apprehenſions had probably preſented them in their ſtrongeſt lights; but Diana's imagination had been ſufficiently fertile in painting terrors; and in the neceſſity of endeavouring to comfort her, they leſſened by degrees to my own view, and I inſenſibly imbibed myſelf ſome portion of the conſolation I would have imparted.

And yet how faint were her colourings, or my own imaginations, to the realities I afterwards experienced! I did not then believe I could have felt—yet the miſtake was natural: Diana and myſelf had only conſidered the reverſe of every thing we knew before of eaſe, of plenty, and of ſplendour: and our buſy fancies had only been frightened by the phantoms of meagre want: pale ſickneſs and ter-

rifying danger ſtill following the ſteps of youth unprotected.—But thoſe apprehenſions admitted of reliefs, and I was comforted: for then my ideas had only extended to perſonal misfortunes, and thoſe I hoped might ſtill be ſurmounted—But ah! the malady of the heart—was an ill the poor Sophia had not then a thought of.

All attempts to ſilence the inceſſant clamours of Diana, at the loſs of all her eaſtern glories, for the ſad contraſt before her in "bad, bad England," were quite ineffectual, till I hinted they might by her return, be once more exchanged: But tho' ſhe now ceaſed her repinings, poor Diana was more afflicted than ever at ſuch an idea; and indeed the faithful creature, tho' ſeveral favourable opportunities have offered, would never, through all the ſcenes of her diſtreſſes, leave "her own dear *Miſsè*," to whom ſhe has ever proved herſelf ſtill more attached than to her idolized India itſelf.

Thus, my Lord, began my misfortunes even on my very landing—my entrance into life as I may call it—but where will they end but with my exit from it!

Mr. Grandby could gain nothing from his uncle but continued invective, ſtill couched in myſterious terms—to fly ſtill further from the hated ſubject, (for Captain Lane too ſometimes ventured to urge him) he haſtened his departure for the country, leaving his nephew

to

to accompliſh the buſineſs which had brought him to town.

If this young gentleman had before expreſſed an intereſt—a concern for my unfortunate ſituation—how was that intereſt, that concern heightened when we met—and if in that forlorn and hapleſs ſituation I felt myſelf all gratitude to whoever wiſhed me well, ah! how did that gratitude overflow my heart when Mr. Grandby was my friend!

Shall I ever forget that day—yet what was that to thoſe that followed—'twas the firſt on which I had ventured out of my room: I was ſitting alone in the parlour, muſing on what might happen.—Mr. Grandby entered—I roſe as he approached—we looked a moment at each other, and then he ſpoke.—"Oh Heaven! are you the young lady from India! and is it you who can want protection!—can need a friend! Are you—are you Miſs Beavour!" His boſom ſwelled with compaſſion, and his eyes with tears. I reply'd—"And was it you who have been ſo good to me, and have yielded me both in yourſelf? Are you not—oh yes, you muſt be Mr. Grandby! I thank you, Sir." Thus introduced, our acquaintance daily improved, till—but I will not anticipate: nor were we conſcious at the time of any thing more than the delight of exciting and of imparting a tender pity and benevolence, that (as they filled our hearts) left nothing more to wiſh for.

Mr. Grandby's viſits became more frequent, but he was now obliged to attend his uncle a few days in the country, and was anxious ere he left town, to ſee me ſettled in ſome more eligible place, than that I now reſided in. He was propoſing my being placed a parlour-boarder in ſome ſchool, when Captain Lane fortunately heard of a brother of my father's, that lived at Hammerſmith, and who having grown up daughters himſelf, would (he thought) beſt know how to feel for the helpleſs condition of an unprotected girl—the wandering orphan of a brother, now no more.

The good man loſt no time in waiting on Mr. Beavour, whom he found in his little ſnug retreat on the road (dignified however by the title of his *country ſeat)* ſurrounded by his wife and three daughters, drinking their tea.

Having introduced himſelf by the intelligence of a new relation juſt from India, he was proceeding with as much delicacy as the caſe would admit, to open my embaraſſed ſituation to my uncle, when he was ſuddenly ſtopped ſhort by his notable wife, who having (to adopt her own ſtyle) ſet her huſband on his legs, by beſtowing on him the twenty thouſand her father had, by ſelling cakes and ſugar-plums, amaſſed, would never ſince allow him to take a ſingle ſtep without her guidance and direction.

'Twas the further habit of this managing lady ever to underſtand a thing before 'twas explained;

explained; and ſhe now, with her uſual volubility, ſaved both gentlemen all further trouble about me, by ſettling the matter herſelf in a trice—crying out in a loud authoritative tone, ere Captain Lane could finiſh—

"Oh la! yes, Sir, to be ſure: certainly—who ſo fit, as you ſay, to be the India-lady's guardian, as her own proper *natural* uncle! Receive her! Oh la, yes, Sir, to be ſure he ſhall—inſtantly: and the ſooner Miſs comes to me the better. I, and her couſins here, will be mighty proud to introduce her in this new and novel world. Speak Miſs Jane, Miſs Sarah, Miſs Grace; won't you like for to wait on your couſin to the Tower, and the play, and St. Paul's, and *Wauxhall?* ay, and to *Kinſington* gardens too I warrant." The Miſſes bowed their aſſent, and the mother went on—"And you ſee, Sir, what a pretty *ſitiation* we have here too—We *knows* how to live in taſte (you may tell the Lady) as well as the *Nabubs* in India. Well, who'd have thought as much? after ſuch a time too? Why, chuck, you thought the Captain, your brother, dead many's the good day; and here—how things do come, and come about—here he was married to a fine Indian princeſs, with a peck of gold to her fortune I warrant, and *kivered* all over with diamonds. Well, Miſs ſhould be called my *Lady*, methinks, at leaſt: but ſome ſays as Lady's too common. I ſuppoſe ſhe's mighty pretty, Sir? tho' a little *dingy* ſomehow?"

Miſs

Miſs Beavour's very fair, Madam—ſhe's your *brother*'s daughter, not"——

" Ay, Sir, to be ſure as you ſay— Some children take after the mother, as my girls here: but Miſs, their couſin, follows the father. Well, if I was to ſpeak my mind freely tho' I could ſay *(haxing* his pardon, as how my brother the Captain might have ſent out for two or three of his nieces here, for fear they might ſtick a hand a little, tho' they be rather comely. When all the world was going to India, hunting *Nabub* huſbands and jewels, I thinks my daughters here might have comed in for their ſhare."

" La! mother (cried Miſs Jane, bridling) no occaſion for that, I hope; beſide, they ſay that now-a-days the lady-market's not much better abroad than at home. Why there's Miſs Nancy Diaper—When her father ſhut up, her mother (Lady ——'s own relation) raked and ſcraped and *fit* her out with a thouſand pounds of ſhoes, and tiffany-trains and pearl-pins; (and ſhe ſaid as every one was *ſartin*, her daughter would hit on Lord ——, and be a counteſs;) and ſo the others were preparing to follow their lady-ſiſter, to make their fortunes as well as ſhe; when behold you—all in a hurry back upon us comes Miſs Nancy Diaper, bag and baggage, pearl pins and all—ſtuff'd in a ſtage coach by herſelf —without Lord or *Nabub*, or ever a huſband at all. But her ſiſters gave out the hot air

and

and grand-racket-living didn't agree with her, tho' when ſhe come home, ſhe looked as healthful as ever ſhe went: then that again, was all the doings of her own proper country."

"Pho ſiſter! (ſaid Miſs Sarah) what ſignifies Miſs Nancy Diaper—She a thouſand pound in fittings! Why don't you know 'twas all a flam? And didn't it all come out at laſt as how the mother was only her Ladyſhip's maid, whom ſhe ſet up in a ſhop, when ſhe married the butler? and how ſhe brought up her daughters to jabber French to be governeſſes to Engliſh miſſes, if ſo be they would not do in India. And there folks commended her, only they ſaid as they ſhould not pretend to airs like their betters."

"And ſure (added the third Miſs) that miſchief one, the raw, pale faced, ſcraggy little ſhrimp one, with the ſharp chin—that was always gnawing her own inſides with envy and ſpite (and ſhe looked for all the world as if ſhe fed on ſomething naſty) why la! ſhe did go over the ſeas to be a governeſs, but was ſoon packed back again as a fine *tutris* indeed to young ladies, with her bold ways, and free opinions: afterward, ſhe was ſuſpected of writing *nonimous* letters about one of the three gentlemen ſhe try'd to catch, tho' he was a *gentleman*, and ſhe knew he was engaged to a *lady*. But he and that very lady ſhe was ſo mad with about him, never heeded her, only ſometimes to divert themſelves at her

ſolly

folly and comical tricks: ſo when ſhe ſaw they laughed at her, and all was coming out, madam was glad to ſneak off without her errand, and was never ſince heard of."

"Why la, girls! and what's they to us? (now aſked Mrs. Beavour) and beſides, have I not told you twenty and twenty times over to mind your breeding, and never contradict each other *'bruptly*, without firſt *haxing* pardon? Captain Lane here may eaſily ſee, tho', I warrant, that you're quite another ſort of ladies as the Diapers: none of your family ever, I aſſure you, were the like: and if your uncle, the Captain, thought fit to ſend out for his nieces, as all the world does, you would all now be blazing with diamonds, and pearl pins too I warrant; but what's done's done: and I've nothing more to ſay.—Pray, Sir, did the Captain, my brother, make ever a will?"

"I really can't tell, Madam, but have too much reaſon to apprehend———"

"Oh la yes to be ſure, Sir.—I dares ſay you have. Why there 'tis now—Well, one muſt not always ſpeak one's mind, and leſs ſaid's ſooneſt mended; or one might ſay, 'twas a comical thing the Captain, my brother, couldn't remember——"

"Yet, my dear, (ventured at laſt to ſpeak the huſband) one muſtn't always ſpeak one's mind; yet you do ſpeak your mind. And why ſhould my brother——"

"And

" And why ſhouldn't I, Mr. Beavour? with twenty thouſand pounds in my pocket (ſlapping it violently) I thinks I have a right to ſpeak my mind when I pleaſe, and thanks to nobody. Who do I care for? Remember, Sir, I never was beholden to you; mind that —'*Why ſhould your brother?*' and why ſhouldn't he pray? If his nieces here had been any of your poor trumpery indeed, I'd have nothing to ſpeak about, if he didn't take no notice of them; for what would he get by that? but with good fortunes in their pockets, he might, methinks, have remembered as they're worth owning."

" I am happy to hear, Madam, (ſaid Captain Lane) you are all in ſuch affluent circumſtances, as 'twill be ſo much in your power——"

" Oh dear yes, Sir—as you ſay: yes, yes: that it will:"——

" Give me leave, Ma'am. Miſs Beavour will be fortunate in the protection ſhe will find under a roof that may be ſtyled next to paternal, and ſhe has ſome right to expect not only protection, but the tendereſt attention from the brother of her father, in her preſent affecting circumſtances; and though her fortune"——

" Very true, Sir: what you ſay, Sir, is very right. Our roof, Sir? Oh la yes! ſhe's very welcome ſure, and I'll never aſk her a penny for board and lodging. Protection! Oh yes

I'll

I'll warrant; and if ſo be, ſhe's in melancholy circumſtances, when ſhe thinks of her friends abroad; dear heart her couſins here ſhall pull her out of doors, and ſhew her all Hammerſmith, to put her in humour.—You ſees what a proſpect's about, Sir.—As to her fortune, I doesn't mind that a whiff—that doesn't make no difference with me: we've all higher notions than that, I'll aſſure you. So, Sir, as I ſaid before, ſhe'll be welcome as ſoon as ſhe pleaſes, for I'll get the ſtuff room duſted and ſet to rights, this very night: and ſo, (as I ſaid before) the ſooner ſhe comes the better. But if ſo be, as Miſs is more ceremonious, my daughters, her couſins here, ſhall wait upon her firſt with all proper formality; they're very *pillite*, Sir; and I took a great deal of care of their breeding myſelf. So the lady, their couſin, need never be aſhamed of them ne'er a day in the year."

Captain Lane now returned, not knowing what to make of his embaſſy: he therefore (as he ſaid) gave me a particular detail, that I might judge for myſelf, and concluded by obſerving, "that tho' the education of my new relations certainly ſeemed ſomewhat confined, and in conſequence, their ſentiments were not of the moſt liberal kind; yet, 'twould be worth conſidering, whether, as their houſe afforded a proper aſylum, and they were willing to receive, and uſe me kindly '——Here Mr. Grandby roſe, and ſtriking his forehead, ſuddenly

ſuddenly exclaimed—" Oh, God, 'tis too much"—but ſeeming to recollect himſelf, he walked away to the window.

" What think you, my dear Miſs Beavour?" (continued Captain Lane.)

" Why, Sir, if you, (here Mr. Grandby turned about) if you and Mr. Grandby have no objection—I think thus circumſtanced, I ought not to deſpiſe—to neglect (I mean) my aunt's invitation." Mr. Grandby continued looking full at me while I ſpoke, and repeating emphatically the word " *objection*" took a turn acroſs the room, then addreſſing himſelf to me—

" From Captain Lane's account I am very certain this '*aſylum*' will be far from eligible: yet till one more worthy Miſs Beavour can offer—that is,—preſents itſelf—If ſhe can condeſcend"—

" Condeſcend, Sir! alas, what better have I now to pretend to? and whatever they are, are they not my relations? Yes, I will go, Sir—(and my heart filled) I will attend you whenever you pleaſe."

Accordingly Captain Lane ſoon after conducted me to my uncle's—my aunt's, (I ſhould ſay,) where I was received with more ceremony than affection, and with more of an awkward ſtiff affectation of politeneſs, than either.

To Captain Lane's delineation of this family, which I purpoſely diſplayed to render that unneceſſary; I ſhall make no addition: nor

nor had I ſo minutely dwelt on the foregoing ſcene, or tired your ear, my Lord, with ſuch trivial impertinence, but as a proper preparation for what was to follow.

Here recollection for a while ſtopped her utterance; and here I ſhall conclude this letter, and in my next reſume Sophia's narrative.

LETTER LXXVIII.

Lord Sedley, in Continuation.

SOPHIA wiped her eyes, and thus proceeded. " The firſt days of my arrival were paſſed in my couſins' ſhewing (or rather pointing out to me) the grand country ſeats in Hammerſmith-ſtreets, where all the *ladies* of their acquaintance had their *ſummer reſidence:* and in dragging me twenty times an hour to look up and down the Thames: for not a coal-lighter, or hulk of any kind could paſs, but I muſt haſte to ſee the beautiful rural proſpects floating on the river.

" Running about the neighbourhood to 'all the ladies of their acquaintance,' to tell the news of their 'new couſin all the way from abroad;' was another delightful, as well as moſt important buſineſs; and I could ſcarcely ſtir out but an hundred heads would pop out of as many doors and windows, for a ſight of the 'India lady:' while thoſe of my couſins would

would waddle from ſide to ſide, as proud of their conſequence, and to call obſervation on the *mighty curioſity* walking between them.

" But now I began to perceive, and deplore the error my aunt's volubility and too quick apprehenſion had unfortunately led to: ſhe had quite miſtaken my circumſtances; and not ſuffering Captain Lane to explain himſelf, had (becauſe ſhe had once taken it into her head it was ſo,) fixed me a ' rich heireſs—a great *Nabubbeſs*'—for thoſe were the epithets I daily overheard in loud whiſpers wherever I paſſed, as my couſins would lag behind, and bridling, add—' Oh la! yes, to be ſure: an hundred thouſand pounds at leaſt—and whole drawers full of diamonds, and pearls, and jewels of all ſorts and ſizes! why ſure my couſin's mother was an Indian queen! juſt ſuch as you ſee in all the plays!"

" And indeed my clothes now arriving, the trunks were ſcarcely ſet down in my room, when I was ſurrounded by mother and daughters, all together clamouring loudly to ſee *thoſe moſt ſurpriſing ſights*, treaſured alone in their wild imaginations.

" The ſplendid illuſion did not long continue—I had been very uneaſy under this fooliſh miſtake, but a childiſh fear (tho I hourly ſaw its neceſſity(kept me from the dreaded explanation, which, apprehending the change in my ſituation in conſequence, (bad at beſt) I ſtill had from day to day deferred.

" I opened

" I opened the trunks, and all hands were in a moment at work.—While every eye dilated broad as ſaucers, to devour at once things never ſeen before! they continued for a while ſuſpended between delight at the novelty they *did* behold, and wonder at ſeeing no more—but diſappointment faſt ſucceeded as expectation of what might yet appear, at laſt died quite away with the diſplay of the trunks' bare bottoms, and—nothing more to be hoped for.—' Were theſe then all the fine clothes, and rich jewels? Why la! ſure the lord mayor's lady on a ſhow day beat me all to pieces.'—Yet, my lord, I poſſeſſed ſome very good and valuable of both; but they, of courſe, fell far ſhort of what thoſe ladies' wild fantaſtic fancies (formed upon what they had ſeen on the ſtage) ſuppoſed of Eaſtern magnificence, adorning Indian queens, like my imagined mother; and of a princeſs, like their couſin.

" But my aunt, never out in her calculations, in a moment accounted for the ſuppoſed inconſiſtency: ' Why, la! now, to be ſure, only think of Miſs! as I'm alive, and ſtand here, ſhe's comed incog, like our ambaſſadors! and ſo, left all her ſplendid ſtate behind her! *peticularly* the *principle* ſets of jewels, for fear as they might be all loſt, or drowned on the ſeas—or mayhap, Miſs you ſent them out before to be put ready in the new-faſhion fangles, againſt you comed yourſelf?

ſelf? Ay, yes to be ſure, that muſt be it, for you never would have the heart for to go for to hide your *talons* under a buſhel, by coming incog. No, no, Miſs, we'll catch you there, and let the cat out of the bag, I warrant. So haſten your appearance, and ſhine out upon us in all your Eaſtern pomp and ſplendour, like the blazing ſun in its full-grown glory! Pray, Miſs, when will you be preſented? and go to your jeweller? and ſet up your equipage? and ſend to your banker?"—

"Prepared as I had been, I was now perfectly aſtoniſhed! and unwilling to contribute by my ſilence, to ſuch deception a moment longer; with tearful eyes I informed them—'I was no princeſs—no heireſs—and that the little matters before them, were the whole of my poſſeſſions—of my riches—except the good fortune I enjoyed in their favour and protection.'

"Ah, my Lord! had you now beheld each fallen countenance as I ſpoke—and the gape of aſtoniſhment changing by quick degrees to ſcorn and anger while I proceeded in my explanation.—Nor had their infatuation perhaps yet given way to conviction, but by the now faſt-flowing tears and ſobs (forced by the ſad effects I had foreſeen) too evidently vouching the melancholy tale of poverty, and dire neceſſity I told.

"The low-bred creatures now inſtantly diſcovered themſelves:—your Lordſhip will

not

not wonder at my ſtyle, tho' ſpeaking of my own relations, (and oh! how I bluſhed for them—for myſelf) when you hear. Indeed, I would in ſhame make ſome concealments, but, for the clearing my own conduct, and for the neceſſary explanation of my ſtory.

When obliging me to a diſplay of my finery, my couſins had eyed ſome muſlins and painted gauzes with ſuch keen and deſiring avidity, that I was happy in an opportunity of expreſſing my gratitude (in all I could) by preſenting them ſome few pieces not yet made up. Hitherto their eyes, and ſome pretty broad hints had only ſpoken.—But now ceremony was no more—The Eaſtern lady—the ſplendid heireſs no longer awed: the poor dependant—and a dependant on their countenance and favour;—what a change was here!

" After their firſt aſtoniſhment had in a degree ſubſided, by a vent of the moſt illiberal expreſſions, and their rage againſt Captain Lane for impoſing a beggar on them for a princeſs, had poured on his devoted head a torrent of abuſe; they once more turned to my poor band-boxes and drawers.—But what before ſeemed ſo unequal to a lady of ſuch rank and fortune, was deemed far otherwiſe for a wandering needy girl, with no reſource but their bounty. It was not now—' La, Miſs!' or ' be ſure Ma'am'—with an awkward reſpect, tempering a vulgar freedom: but,

but, 'Piſh, girl! (accompany'd by coarſe and ſhocking elbowing airs) hold your tongue—what do you talk to me of brothers? and nieces? and orphans? and ſtuff? What would I get by minding ſuch nonſenſe? would any one care for me, if I hadn't nothing in my pocket? And now, what's to be done with them there things? why they're quite *unproper* for one in your way of life: I ſuppoſe you means to go to *ſarvice*, don't you? ſure for *ſartin* Captain Lane didn't mean to foſter you on us longer than you can get a place? I promiſe you I'll tell him a piece of my mind, I ſhall: how durſt he for to come to introduce you to my daughters here! I aſſure you, young woman, they never kept company with ſarving folks before, I warrant. Why Miſs Jane, 'twas ſure the luckieſt thing in the world, your new ſarſnet bonnet was not waſhed up, and gauffer'd again, or you would have expoſed yourſelf laſt Sunday afternoon all over *Kinſington* Gardens: and they ſay, as 'twas a mob of great folks and nobility all huſtling by the ſhoulders, to paſs as they walked. But what's to be done in this here affair? I am all at a ſtand—and ſo *concarned* for your loſs and diſappointment, girls, about your couſin here—(God keep us from ſuch kin, ſay I) for to be ſure, you thought as ſhe'd be quite company for you when ſhe'd ſet up her coach?'

"Dear,

" Dear, yes, (anſwered one of them) and that we did. Why, I and ſiſters were ſettling matters but now, how we'd go to drink tea in couſin's new coach when it rained, and we couldn't ride to *Wauxhall*, nor Florida Gardens: and now, only to ſee what look's come on't. As to theſe here things; why mother, to be ſure ſhe means to ſell 'em for *ſartin*, for if ſo be ſhe'd wear them, ſhe'd never get a place: for folks would ſay as ſhe was looking out another kind of *ſarvice*. Now, as you can't turn the poor thing out of doors, till ſhe ſees to what ſhe can turn herſelf; I thinks to do her a favour, we had beſt keep ſome of theſe here jingumbobs for board and lodging: for as ſhe's never a farthing in her pocket, 'twill be better be ſure than loſing of all."

" A good thought, by jingo, (cries another) and fair play's a jewel: ſo do you take that painted ſattin, and I'll have this *broider'd* taffeta. Grace, you keep the worked muſlin"— and they ſoon diſtributed the beſt of the ſpoils amongſt them, nor had the trinkets in the little caſket, my aunt held in her hand, eſcaped diſtribution, (for I continued during the preceding ſcene a mute ſtatue) but now reſentment with recollection riſing to my aid, I begged I might be allowed at leaſt a voice in the diſpoſal of my own property: and my uncle juſt then coming in, I aſked him, at what price he eſtimated the clothes ſpread out on thoſe chairs?

" What

"What price, niece? why they'd fetch a round ſum I believe if they ſold for half what they coſt: but there's the matter—for buying and ſelling's quite two things, niece."

"Well ladies (turning to them while they ſeem'd for a moment a little confuſed by my manner—I did feel raiſed) I fancy thoſe I have already preſented you, will amply pay for half a dozen breakfaſts and dinners, and not another will I condeſcend to eat in this houſe"

My uncle, all ſurprize, demanded, or rather intreated an explanation. They gave him one their own way, with new invective on Captain Lane's aſſurance, and a daſh at me for keeping up my airs. Mr. Beavour ſaid, 'twas her own fault, for not letting Captain Lane ſpeak; and bid her remember ſhe promiſed to aſk nothing for my board and lodging.

"Why who could have ſuppoſed (replied his wife) as a man in his ſenſes could have comed on ſuch a fool's errand? I take in beggar folks for nothing, and get nothing by it? catch me—no, no: who'd be fool then? as to her living, I thought as I and the girls here would get more by preſents and coach-hire, and treats to the plays, and ſights, and ſo that would be eggs for bacon, you know: that's one of my ways, and nothing for nothing's another, let who will like it—what's that to me? with twenty thouſand pounds in my pocket, I doesn't care for nobody, not I."

"Well, well, my dear, (ſaid the poor man)

there's reaſon in what you ſay, and you muſt do as you pleaſe, to be ſure, Yet, for your own ſake, only conſider what a diſgrace 'twill be to our family, that a woman related to it ſhould be ſuffered to work for her bread, while the reſt have more than they can eat."—He was going on, but was ſilenced, by being deſired not to be ſo laviſh of other people's wealth, which tho' it had ſet him *on his legs*, he wasn't to pretend to run away with.—But he ſtill grumbling on, (tho' in a lower key,) of " the ſcandal of *their* relations being *other* peoples' ſervants;" they affected to be ſoftened, and declared they would not turn me over to ſtrangers, that might uſe me hardly; but on condition I gave up all my uſeleſs trumpery; I ſhould be ſuffered to ſtay as maid to the young ladies, who had long wanted a proper *cretur* to buckle their curls o'nights, than red-fiſted Nan the cook-made—and one of them added by way of encouragement; that if I behaved myſelf, I might be allowed as a favour of an evening after cleaning myſelf, whenever they drank tea in the back parlour; to ſit down, and make one.

A kind of ſtupefaction had for ſome time held me dumb—I now burſt into tears—I believe, my lord, at that moment they were more of paſſion than of grief—for I remember, I ſtamped, and the words—" Wretches—deſpicable wretches!" I believe eſcaped me as I ruſhed out of the room, and calling loudly for Diana to follow me, was out of the houſe, and

and in the ſtreet in a moment, unknowing my own intention, or whither I went. Or to turn to the right, or left, was the ſame to unhappy me: the neceſſity, however, of quickly deciding obliged me to move, but clapping, my hands as I cried aloud (with lifted eyes, that ſtill continued pouring out their torrents) "Oh God, protect me!" I found myſelf ſtopped by—Mr. Grandby.

"Miſs Beavour! (and he took my claſped hands as they dropped down) my God! whither are you going! I aſk not wherefore thoſe tears: nor the heart-rending exclamation I heard—too,—too well I divine—but I beſeech you to come back one moment—you muſt not go on thus—look not on me ſo—ſpeak Sophia:—kill me not by a ſilence and that face of woe, more dreadful than any explanation can be."

Still might he have urged me to ſpeak—nothing but a motion to lead me back, had given the power—and with a voice that ſeemed to ſound hollow from my breaſt, I cried—

"Detain me not, Mr. Grandby—let me fly from *that houſe*, far as my ſtrength will bear me, and then I'll lay me down, and reſt for ever."

"Ah, Sophia—my loved Sophia!—talk not thus while I—deareſt girl, while I live to prevent it; no power on earth ſhall harm you: yes, you ſhall reſt—but on this boſom alone, where you have been treaſured ever ſince firſt beheld."

" Talk not thus wildly, Mr. Grandby—increaſe not my difficulties I beſeech you: the God above bleſs you—but—"

" But what?—And why will not you bleſs me, who only can? be mine this moment—and if you have cares, give them to me, Sophia."

" And would they then be lightened? For Heaven's ſake ceaſe.—Is this a time—if you indeed love, pity the poor Sophia; carry me back to Captain Lane—in this extremity he will yet adviſe me."

I could now ſcarcely ſtand the exertion I had made after being ſo deeply affected—the meeting iu ſuch an hour Mr. Grandby—this declaration—ſo ſtrange!—or rather ſo ſudden—for I thought before he loved me—and the impropriety therefore——indeed, my lord, I was ready to ſink:—and all this paſſed ſo quick—ſo inſtantaneouſly—'twas like a viſion: and Grandby ſeemed an angel dropped from the heavens to comfort me.

'Twas only now Diana came up tho' on my calling ſhe but ſtayed to ſnatch my hat in her way, ſeeing me run wild into the ſtreet without one.

Mr. Grandby and the poor weeping creature led me on to a ſeat under a diſtant tree: when a little recovered, he left me to look for a coach. (having been himſelf ſet down by a friend at the turn of the road) and ſoon returning, we drove to——— Street, where we expected to find Captain Lane: but he had diſcharged

diſcharged his lodgings the very day before, an expreſs arriving from the country to haſten him home, on the ſudden indiſpoſition of his wife.

Here was a new dilemma—I now almoſt repented, but ſoon checked the unworthy thought. Sure—ſure I had rather ſerve or bear ill-treatment from a ſtranger, (if unfortunate in my choice) than from my own relations;—and I had at the time no other idea: no other alternative than going to ſervice.

I had, during our little journey to town, given Mr. Grandby an account of what had paſſed at my uncle's; and in the midſt of all his ſurprize, all his reſentment, he frequently laughed as I proceeded, till ſtopped by the ſighs that would interrupt my words.

The good Mrs. Brown was alarmed by my ſwoln eyes, and at my appearing ſo much affected by Captain Lane's abſence. She forced me to take a glaſs of wine, very kindly offered me my old room, and hoped I would remain till more agreeably accommodated.

As ſoon as ſhe left us, Mr. Grandby, in a leſs confuſed manner than before, declared himſelf my lover, and beſought me (could I return his affection) by an immediate union to give him a right to protect me.

Had I conſulted my own heart, or ſuffered that to bias me, I had inſtantly complied—but howéver ſwayed afterward, I had then more reſolution, and already loved Mr.

Grandby too well to take advantage of an affection, that might (had I not better thought) have precipitated him to inevitable ills.

Mr. Grandby was yet under age, and altogether dependant: his greateſt expectations (if not all) were from his uncle, for his father, at the time a hale man in the vigour of his life (tho' otherwiſe one of the worthieſt of characters) by living up to more than his income, and neceſſary expences warranted, promiſed greatly to involve his eſtate; and had he lived longer, 'tis more than probable the whole had been mortgaged.

With ſo many calls for money, 'tis to be ſuppoſed he rejoiced in Mr. Williams's partial affection for his nephew: for he entirely took him off his hands: ſupplied all his expences; and declared he would make him his principal heir.

Would I then riſk the favour he enjoyed with an uncle on whom ſo much depended? I, who ſo well knowing his averſion, had already ſo much reaſon to dread his heightened reſentment, (on ſuch new provocation) to the child (tho' innocent) of an offending (yet I hope not guilty) father? No—I would not liſten—I did more—I huſhed the pleadings of my beating little heart, and abſolutely rejected Mr. Grandby, till better proſpects opened. Yet it was a hard trial—and harder too at ſuch a ſeaſon: when the want of every other friend, had rendered the moſt common one a

treaſure

treaſure. What then was Mr. Grandby! Yes: Heaven, when it deprived me of all the reſt, gave me in him, even more than I had loſt—and I felt—I knew not the want of more.

Yet, in declining his hand for the preſent, I was obliged to compromiſe—I did but hint my reſolve of endeavouring to ſeek an eſtabliſhment in ſome indulgent family, whoſe humanity would accept the exertion of my ſervices, (ſince little other merit could I pretend to) but now, I was obliged in turn to deſiſt—the agony into which the bare ſuggeſtion of ſuch an idea threw the unhappy young man, obliged me to deſiſt—and as he cried—"Will you not even allow me to ſerve you Sophia? tho' you reject me for a huſband (while I adore you the more for your motive) may I not be your friend? and were our ſituations reverſed, would I be ſo cruel to decline your aid? Ah, my Sophia! let me not have to ſay I could be ſuperior."—While he ſpoke, I grew half aſhamed of a delicacy, I began to deem a falſe one, ſince it gave him pain: and then, reflecting amid the gloom that now enveloped our way, that fortune might at ſome future period become more propitious, I would not (I thought) by a ſtill more levelling ſtep, preclude myſelf all poſſibility of then enjoying her ſmiles. Thus a flattering, tho' ſo diſtant dawn, led on my firſt unwary hope.

After much conſolation, propoſing, objecting; 'twas reſolved I ſhould ſtay where I was,

till this propitious hour in the clouds, ſhould lighten on our heads; and thus my fooliſh heart felt lighter. 'Twas true—" I was a poor young creature without a relation in the world to look up to—but then I was beloved by Mr. Grandby, and he had told me ſo; and while he loved me, could I be unhappy?" True too —" I had ſcarce a guinea in the world, and giving up the only way to remedy the ill, was I not ſtill a poor dependant; and on whom? not on relations now—but Heaven!—A man! —a ſtranger!—a ſtranger! Relations! vile union of ideas! Mr. Grandby a ſtranger?— no, no—I was related to him by every tie of gratitude; and he was mine: a piece of my very heart: and to love him, to be obliged to him, was virtue—was honour." And more, to lighten the fear of being burthenſome to him, my ideas now flying beyond the power of a check to regulate their airy flights, found new reſources for each ill. I determined as ſoon as my things came from Hammerſmith, to diſpoſe of my jewels and other ornaments I could very well diſpenſe with, and from the ſale, I expected great matters—perhaps enough to ſupport me till this expected, this auſpicious change (whate'er it would be) that was to crown our wiſhes. Thoughtleſs and ever ſanguine youth! to what doſt thou expoſe us!

Sweetly delicate was Mr. Grandby's manner of offering to ſupply me—I could not feel offended—not even abaſhed—but relying on my little caſket at Hammerſmith, (of which I re-

I reſolved to tell him nothing) I aſſured him I ſtill had enough for my preſent occaſions.

And now, ſuch was the effect my ideal expectations, his goodneſs, his avowed attachment, and our mutual hopes of being united, had on my full heart; not only eaſed of the weight that ſorely preſſed it in the morning, but bounding now with new gratitude, new affection, and with ſpringing joy; (I thought indeed it would have burſt its priſon) and—I know not how—but Mr. Grandby, before we parted, made me own I loved him; and ſuch too was my delight in the tranſport this declaration cauſed in his dear boſom, that I could not help repeating it, till all our fears were lulled, and if we were not in reality ſo, we certainly believed ourſelves ſupremely happy.

Every thing with Mrs. Brown was ſoon adjuſted, and we now ſeparated—Mr. Grandby haſtening back to the country, (from whence he had ſtolen on pretence of a viſit to his father,) leſt his uncle ſhould ſuſpect us, and detection and conſequent ruin enſue.

The next day I received a letter from him, all grateful love and rapture—how I treaſured thoſe firſt dear lines!—But thoſe too, I know not how, are loſt for ever.

Diana was diſpatched in the morning with the neceſſary aſſiſtance for my trunks, and ordered to leave nothing I had carried, behind her, but the pieces I mentioned having given away. I boded no good from her tedious de-

lay—at length the evening brought her, and the trunks to be ſure—but if they were near empty, poor Dy was ſo full ſhe could not at firſt tell me the matter. In ſhort, my lord, the boxes contained little more than half my linen, and ſome inferior gowns: the beſt, with my laces and the caſket, were detained till my board and lodging (with my ſervant's) ſhould be paid. Your lordſhip may ſuppoſe I ſent inſtantly for the bill—it was a curious one: the houſe, as if I had occupied the whole, was doubly charged for the week I was there: and 'twas alledged, that as I had been impoſed on them for a princeſs, entertainment ſuitable to my ſuppoſed rank had been daily provided. However, had it amounted to but half the money, it had been beyond my ability to pay. Yet the wary creaturs (illiterate as they were) wanted not for low evaſive cunning: apprehending the poſſibility of my raiſing the ſum, and finding out (doubtleſs thro' Diana) Captain Lane's departure from town; they declared, tho' I had eloped from them with the young ſpark they ſaw me go off with, they would give up my things only to Captain Lane, who had placed me with them, tho' they had not been able to keep me; and 'twas evident enough, (they told Diana) the reaſon I diſdained their counſel was, becauſe I preferred my evil ways to earning an honeſt livelihood: and they bid her tell me—" See what would come of it." This, added to the

the mortification of ſeeing each of the young ladies decked out in her poor *Miſs's* hats, caps, and feathers, ſet the girl half-mad.—She told them "they did not know how to put them on, and looked juſt like the elephants in her country when dreſt for battle." Nay, on pretence of adjuſting ſomething amiſs on one of them, ſhe maliciouſly ſqueezed lace, wires, feathers, and flowers into one undiſtinguiſhed maſs, and 'tis probable head and all had fallen a ſacrifice to her indignant rage, but for the timely interpoſition which forced Dy to a retreat, tho' ſhe continued the whole day trying the cauſe, vowing ſhe would not leave the houſe without reſtoration: but night approaching, and the porters declaring they would ſtay no longer, ſhe was obliged to come away with what ſhe could get.

Tho' diſappointed for the preſent about raiſing the money I ſhould want, and highly provoked by ſuch added inſolence and accumulating wrongs; I was not very uneaſy about my effects, (which tho' not of the higheſt value, were my little all) believing Captain Lane would ſoon ſee juſtice done me, with regard to their reſtitution, and the impoſing bill I had received. I therefore reſolved to ſay nothing of the matter to Mr. Grandby—for beſide my wiſhes to conceal from him my intention with reſpect to the jewels, I was apprehenſive of an interview, ſhould he be informed of their unjuſt alluſions and behaviour.

But, my lord, I was a ſimple inexperienced creature

creature—for idly taking it for granted Captain Lane muſt of courſe know where to find me out in ſuch a place as *London*; I was but beginning to wonder at his tedious delay in the country, when careleſsly glancing over a newſpaper, I was ſtruck with an important piece of intelligence to me, when with equal ſorrow and ſurprize I read—of Captain Lane's having ſailed from the Downs the day before for Bengal! I could have cry'd more at my folly than ill-fortune, for I now clearly perceived my error (but reflection never came with me but at the price of ſad experience) in leaving the knowledge of my addreſs to the people, whoſe intereſt it was to conceal it. I made no doubt but Captain Lane had called at Hammerſmith ere he left the kingdom, to bid me adieu: but what conſiderably added to my anguiſh and regret, was, that from the probable accounts he had received, his prejudices againſt me had prevented his intention to ſeek me. In this conjecture I was confirmed, by the anſwer to a note I inſtantly wrote to Hammerſmith, which I could juſt ſufficiently make out, to learn, that "Captain Lane had indeed been there, and had departed, perfectly ſatisfied with them and all they had done."

I had now nothing left me but patience; for the many interviews I had, during this interval, with Mr. Grandby, and the continual proofs I received of his goodneſs, his merit, his diſintereſted affection, had now ſo cloſely twined him round my heart, that far from endangering

him

him in a diſpute with thoſe low malicious people, I could not even bear to give him the pain I knew he would endure, from a knowledge of the many impoſitions and affronts I had ſuſtained.

'Tis obſerved that time uſually ſoftens or wears away our croſſes and afflictions—fortune had ſtill a more effectual method of ever lightening mine: a new, or greater misfortune than the paſt, generally wiped away each former trace, by leaving no room or reflection but for preſent ills—and thus it now happened.

I ſeldom walked far by myſelf, Mr. Grandby having frequently warned me of the impropriety of doing ſo; but one evening having occaſion to ſtep a very little way for ſomething I wanted at a particular ſhop, I ventured—and had reaſon ever after to deplore my departure in this firſt and only inſtance, from the injunctions of my Grandby.

Having fooliſhly trifled away the time about my little purchaſe, the lamps were lighted before my return. I haſtened my ſtep—but was overtaken ere I could get home, by an ill-looking, yet worſe-bred man, tho' dreſſed like a gentleman: his addreſs was not abſolutely rude, yet he talked ſo ſtrangely, I could not well underſtand him—fluttered too by being thus accoſted in the ſtreet by a ſtranger, I really thought he was making love to me, and (believing I could not more effectually ſilence him) I informed him, I was abſolutely engaged: but this ſo far from having the deſired effect, only ſet him chattering ten times faſter:

tho'

tho' I ſaid as little as poſſible, he told me he was more charmed by my words than even by my perſon: and proved it by paying himſelf, as well as me, a moſt curious compliment: for he declared if I was not the moſt bewitching innocent in nature, I hit it off delightfully. This brought us to Mrs. Brown's door, when he had the temerity to follow me into the houſe; I was quite aſtoniſhed—but immediately concluding I muſt have been miſtaken, and that his buſineſs was with Mrs. Brown; I very readily informed her on our entering the room together, there was a gentleman who, I believed, wanted to engage her firſt floor. She begged to know who had honoured her with a recommendation, and at the ſame time taking up a candle to ſhew her apartments, he followed, giving me ſuch an odd kind of look as he paſſed me, that recollecting the wildneſs of his talk in the ſtreet, I really feared my new acquaintance would prove a mad-man, and heartily prayed he might diſlike the rooms.

But Heaven would not hear me—for after ſome time they came down; every thing had been ſettled: and Mr. Grange, who was not to take poſſeſſion till next day, was invited to ſupper.

His behaviour was now very different indeed, and he chatted away ſo rationally, that I once more changed my opinion from the ſuppoſition of conſtant madneſs, to that of caſual intoxication, now wearing off.

Mrs. Brown, after he left us, laugh'd heartily

tily at my account; and aſſuring me Mr. Grange was a man of character and fortune, well recommended, I went to bed perfectly ſatisfy'd, and the following day he arrived to dinner.

For ſome time I had nothing to complain of—Mr. Grange was indeed an agreeable companion, tho' there was ſomething in his look I could not even then be quite reconciled to.

Mr. Grandby ſoon after arrived from the country: he did not at firſt ſeem much pleaſed with the appearance of our new lodger, but Mr. Grange either naturally poſſeſſing, or then, for his own purpoſes (as I ſince ſuſpect) aſſuming the moſt inſinuating manner and addreſs, he had the art to gain Grandby's entire confidence, and they ſoon became almoſt inſeparable friends. I had at firſt apprehended Mr. Grange would recollect my fooliſh confeſſion of an engagement, but believing he muſt have been at the time inebriated, I hoped as he never mentioned the circumſtance after, he had quite forgotten it: but here I was again deceived, and am now firmly perſuaded he was the author of Mr. Williams's gaining a knowledge of our ſecret, notwithſtanding all our caution: tho' Grandby would never admit the idea, and ever checked my harbouring what he termed—a ſuſpicion ſo unjuſt.

The poor unwary youth had ſcarcely returned home from this viſit, when he wrote me word, his uncle had diſcovered all, and threatened inſtantly to daſh him from his will, unleſs he would give me up, and prepare for a voy-

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age to India, in an employment he would immediately procure him. He intreated me to confide in him, declaring, he would loſe me but with life; and concluded with charging me not to write, nor be uneaſy, ſhould I not for ſome time hear from him, as he was ſtrictly watched.

Strictly indeed! for many a weary day, and many a tedious night revolved, and paſſed away, and not a line from my dear Grandby, nor one word of any information about him: and to render this period ſtill more dreadful, I was hourly expoſed to the nauſeous addreſſes of Mr. Grange: yet ſtrange—he never mentioned Mr. Grandby; and tho' I had reaſon to ſuppoſe he knew of our attachment, did I ever dare allude to him, among the many motives I daily urged for wiſhing his eternal ſilence on this hateful ſubject.

My money was now expended, and Mrs. Brown informed me my quarter had long expired; and that nothing but an abſolute neceſſity for money, could occaſion her thus reminding me.

What could I do? I was deliberating about which of the trifles yet remaining from the depredations of my couſins, I ſhould part with, when Grandby—my dear Grandby came a ſecond time to aid me.

In his loved preſence forgetting all my paſt uneaſineſs, and cares, I did not acquaint him with the ſolicitations I had received from either Mr. Grange, or Mrs. Brown.

But my Grandby's intreaties for our immediate union, how could I now withſtand! Yes,

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my lord—he was going—had been obliged to yield to his cruel uncle—his offended father, and was leaving me: but he firſt beſought me to be his.—Nothing I could offer to poſtpone this inauſpicious marriage, could avail: he vowed he would not go—no, he would ſtay, and brave the worſt that could befall, would not his Sophia, by a private union, firſt diſſipate all danger of his loſing her for ever: but once poſſeſſed of that ſweet certainty, he had no doubt of overcoming every obſtacle in time; or at worſt—fortune, however here ſhe ſhut him from her favours, ſhould be obliged to yeild in India to that ſword he was now offering to his country's cauſe; and render him independent of every power that would obſtruct his wiſhes.

Ah, how I trembled as my boding fears—but what could I do? Alas! my lord, in an unhappy hour I yielded, and—we were married."—

Here, Elmour, you may well ſuppoſe I interrupted—

" Married, madam! Did you ſay, married! I thought—I feared"—

" Ah, Sir! however deceived, ſure I may well call that a marriage we both believed a good one: tho' that impious murderer of my peace for ever—the villain Grange, by the moſt ſhocking artifice (diſcover'd after Grandby had embarked) impoſed on the confiding youth a ſpurious clergyman and licence: but what he then intended, availed not."

Once

Once more, my lord, Sophia was interrupted—I could no longer ſit it—Grandby embarked for India! Married! Great God, what horrid impoſition! Sweet innocent—yet to believe her fell deſtroyer alſo deceived by Grange—nor ſee through the colluſion, as glaring as impious!—I was obliged to leave the room for ſome moments on this new diſcovery of Grandby's perfidy—worſe, far worſe indeed, than any before ſuſpected. I had imputed all to thoughtleſs youth—perhaps to levity—but this—oh! barbarous impoſition! premeditated baſeneſs! loſt—loſt, unworthy Grandby! now, not a hope to lighten your offence remained—and my heart ſickened at the certainty, while even I was forced to give him up.

Sophia imputing my indiſpoſition to compaſſion alone, would not indulge my curioſity further, till I ſhould be a little more compoſed.—I took my leave, but will now haſten to attend the ſequel of this poor unfortunate's adventures, of which your lordſhip ſhall receive the earlieſt information.

LETTER LXXIX.

Lord Sedley in Continuation.

"MR. GRANGE (continued the dear deceived) now affected to have juſt diſcovered the cauſe of his ill ſucceſs, and aſ-

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ſured me he bowed before Mr. Grandby's prior claim. He begged me to conceal his former pretenſions, as his '*dear friend*' might otherwiſe be led to apprehend he would have taken an ungenerous advantage of his abſence. I had a better motive for my ſilence—I apprehended danger from ſuch information; for tho' Grandby had not confeſſed to me his imprudence in having made a confident of this gentleman; I am as certain he did ſo, as that he ever after had reaſon to repent it."

One great difficulty now intervened—we were both under age, and all our projects at a ſtand; while poor Grandby looked deſpair—But Oh the tranſport painted in his face, when a few hours after, he flew to inform me the intereſt of a friend—the *beſt of friends* had interpoſed, and procured a ſpecial licence, and that a clergyman was ready to unite us—Generous unguarded youth! from his own unſuſpecting nature open to arts, his inexperience could not have ſuſpected—My Lord, we were thus blindly led willing victims to the altar, a ſacrifice to perfidy, and ſhortly, very ſhortly after, my Grandby—my friend—my huſband—(for ſurely ſuch he was) aſſuring me I ſhould ſhortly ſee a friend, to whom he had intruſted his deareſt treaſure in his abſence, left me, and ſailed for India. Oh the pang when Grandby was gone from me! how light, how unaffecting ſeemed every ill I had before endured to this! Yet, leſt ſome glimmering diſtant ray of hope might dart a gleam over my ſickening

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ing boſom, to keep me from abſolute deſpair, Fate ſoon drew her dubious curtain cloſe, and darken'd the ſcene for ever.

I had declared poſitively to my Grandby, before we parted, againſt continuing longer with Mrs. Brown: he begged me to remain a few days only, when I ſhould be removed by a guardian, he, ſmiling, intreated me to love, almoſt as well as I did him: but the dear trifler little believed, while he only meant to ſurpriſe his lone Sophia, by this conſolatory friend, he was dragging her with him into the ſnare prepared.

Long, long I waited—but no friend appeared—the wretched Sophia had not now a friend: and each approaching ſtep, or ſound were liſtened to in vain—The wretched Sophia had not now a friend!

My quarter was juſt expiring, when my huſband left me: my huſband! yes, ſo I ſhall ever call him—for ſo, then in our own, and Heaven's eye, he was: but now he's loſt to me. Mrs. Brown again became importunate, and I was again determining to part with all I could ſpare, with deſign to pay her, and procure a cheaper lodging, till I could hear from Mr. Grandby, whom I had already acquainted with my ſad diſappointment. Alas! he never, I believe, received that, or any other letter, his Sophia wrote him.

Mr. Grange had hitherto been ſilent:—but now—hear now, my Lord, the daring falſehoods he advanced—yes, he now demanded

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to be heard (for I ever avoided him) on an affair of conſequence: and the wretch preſumed to tell me, after ſome prefatory nonſenſe, my Grandby had deceived me: had impoſed on me a falſe licence for a true one; and that the ſuppos'd clergyman was but a creature of his own! More, Oh God! could I have lived, had I believed him, to hear more! he told me he was himſelf the friend—the ſucceſſor recommeded by my betrayer—my deſerter—and concluded, by aſſuring me, he had promiſed to take me off his hands; and that he was now ready to receive me—pay my debts—and ſettle on me a competent annuity for life.

Your Lordſhip may eaſily ſuppoſe in what manner this information was received—I treated it with a contempt that ſeemed to raiſe me in the air, while the fell ruffian, that would have deſtroyed my Grandby's character, appeared as groveling at my feet, below even the anger he excited! But, Oh! the protecting Providence that ſtill gave me to ſuſtain my faith in Grandby in that dreadful hour! He called—and the very man who had aſſumed the ſacred veſtments to unite us, entered in ſordid livery; and while the barbarous wretch exulting aſked, if ever I beheld that *gentleman* before? he but waited to deliver me the ſpurious parchment, and vaniſhed from my eyes, as did for a long time the light of heaven, and with it the ſenſe and recollection of my miſery and wrongs.

I remained ſome days in an almoſt continual delirium

delirium—Diana was inconſolable: Mrs. Brown alarmed: and tho' Grange was under the greateſt apprehenſions for my life, they did not dare call in a phyſician to my aid, for fear of diſcoveries.

That confidence in Grandby which, in my loweſt ſtate of dejection, had never once forſaken my boſom: enabled me to combat my diſorder; and the firſt moments of returning health, I employed in putting my reſolve of quitting Mrs. Brown (whom I had ſome time ſuſpected) in immediate execution. To enable me to do ſo, I ſcarcely left myſelf any thing to wear; for my inexperience and wants were eaſily perceived, and the advantage taken of them by thoſe I had recourſe to, as eaſily permitted.

I now paid Mrs. Brown: and followed by the ever faithful companion of my fortune (who could on this new reduction, carry under her arm, without the leaſt inconvenience, all that remained of my poor wardrobe) I ſet out with deſign to take poſſeſſion of a little apartment I had hired, and purpoſed to remain in, till Grandby's further direction ſhould arrive.

'Twas near the cloſe of day—for I choſe that hour to ſteal out of the houſe unperceived, leſt Mr. Grange might either impede, or purſue my flight: and to conceal my intention, I left the ſum I owed Mrs. Brown, with a note to her, on my toilette.

Again I turned from an inhoſpitable door, a ſolitary—friendleſs—ah, now an undone, wretch

wretch indeed! and now, no Grandby to appear once more to mitigate my ſorrows—to cheer my lonely ſteps. My diſtracted thoughts wandered—I turned—and turned the contrary way to that I ſhould have followed. In vain, when I perceived, I would have rectified my error—for not dreaming of ſuch an accident, I had not thought of learning the name of the ſtreet I had engaged a room in. I was now obliged to tread back my weary ſteps, and not till in the very ſtreet I ſet out from, could I tell how to proceed. Unfortunate Sophia! not the important only; the moſt trivial chances of thy life, have ever led thee to certain ill! I paſſed Mrs. Brown's door; but as Grange opened it to ſeek me; and even then (dark as it was) I might, had I been ſilent, have paſſed unknown, but for an involuntary ſcream at the horrid ſight, that ſoon betrayed me into a ruffian's power. Yet, fool! to believe I could for once be fortunate.—The wily man, my Lord, affecting not to know me, returnd into the houſe, and hurrying on a cloak and hat, that quite diſguiſed him, iſſued again thro' a back way, and overtook me at the corner of the ſtreet.

Were the very elements combining againſt me? I had not hitherto minded a little rain, but now it poured, and I was forced to call a coach. A new difficulty—where was the man to drive? I endeavoured to deſcribe to him a ſtreet with a church at the end of it, and a kind of tower, or court, in the middle—The coachman heſitated—but the man in the cloak

at

at my heels, declared in a violent Iriſh accent, he knew the lady's meaning very well, tho' he forgot the name of the place, and would direct the driver, would he let him on the box: he did conſent; and after a long drive thro' unknown ways, the coach ſtopped at a houſe, and in a ſtreet, neither of which I had ever ſeen before. All confuſion and terror, I ſcarcely knew what paſſed—the coachman deſired us to alight—then vaniſhed, followed by a thouſand pretended execrations from the muffled impoſtor, who, by ſome ſtrange enchantment, inſtantly procured a poſt coach, which paſſing on me for a hackney one (once more directing the driver) in an evil hour I aſcended—nor, tho' aſſailed by a thouſand fears, did I in the leaſt apprehend the dreadful deſtiny that awaited me, till we ſtopped, and the archfiend, Grange, in his own proper ſhape, appeared, to hand me out of the carriage into a houſe of his own, he had ſomewhere near town, and doubtleſs reſerved for ſimiliar adventures. Oh my feelings at that moment! let me fly them, my Lord, ere they once more drive me to actual madneſs—Yet, ſure, that madneſs ſaved me that night, and the ſucceeding day from the lawleſs villain—Yes: I exclaimed—tore—raged like a tygreſs—and terrified, he deferred his machinations.

But now fatigued, exhauſted, ſunk—What, but for my dear Diana, had become of me? 'Twas ſhe that ſaved me: for perceiving Grange himſelf almoſt overcome by two ſleepleſs nights,

ſhe

ſhe now determined to aſſiſt his ſlumbers by a potent doſe of that ſoporiferous drug, which ſhe, with many of her country, had in two frequent uſe.

After warning me not to touch of a diſh at table Grange ever ſupped on; ſhe haſtened to prepare the artful mixture, which not only happily ſet my Cerberus aſleep; but by her further agency extending to the kitchen, ſoon lulled to indolence and ſtupor, the only two domeſtics this little box contained: for (excepting a cook) the neceſſary agent of his maſter's profligacy, was alone to be truſted here.

Scarce were the things removed, ere Morpheus faſt-ſealed the hateful eyes that had all the evening darted on me their baleful glances—and my impatience to fly for ever their power to offend me more, became extreme: but I was not to ſtir till Dy announced all was ſecure below. At length ſhe came, and ſcarce could the tremblings of my weakened frame (increaſed by the joy this glorious opportunity inſpired) allow me ſtrength to take the advantage it afforded. Add to Diana's wild exceſſes—for, my Lord, elated by her opportune ſucceſs, her triumph promiſed to defeat its ends. She laughed aloud—hallo'd to Grange to help my cloak on—and highly diverted at the ridiculous appearance now before her, the ſilly creature determining its object ſhould ſhare the mirth he had excited, conceived an odd idea—And while I urged;

intreated; raved; diſtracted by a thouſand fears this mad delay occaſioned; regardleſs of all but the ſtrange revenge ſhe meditated, ſhe proceeded to tie him to his chair; then dreſſing a monſtrous doll, ſhe placed it in his arms, while a written ſcroll, fixed from its mouth, promiſed returning love. But what moſt terrified me, and pleaſed the trifling girl (relying on the effectual doſe ſhe had adminiſtered) was her temerity in venturing not only to disfigure the wretch, to a ſhocking degree, by ſmearing his face with oil and blacking; but her proceeding (leſt he ſhould wake too ſoon (as ſhe ſaid) and call, unable to loſe himſelf for help) to gag his mouth, whence iſſued another label, on which was written—" At length triumph! Oh power of beauty! 'tis to theſe charms I owe my conqueſt! but ha—love now ſubdues me in my turn—alas! I cannot move—I cannot even call my faithful emiſſary's aid"—with more of ſuch ſtuff: and that nothing of thoſe lovely figures ſhould be loſt on him, ſhe placed him directly oppoſite a large pier-glaſs, in which, on his firſt waking, the whole might be reflected to the greateſt advantage.

But of the effect which this ſcene produced, I knew nothing: for I now dragged Diana (after a moment's exultation over her finiſhed work) out of the houſe: from whence, thank Heaven! we eſcaped unſeen, unheard.

Long we wandered in the dark, unknowing the ways we travelled: for our wiſh was to avoid

avoid the roads till day break, when we might probably get places in ſome of the London ſtages. Several paſſed us, but they were all full. I could walk no further—I was fainting; and Diana ſupporting my ſinking head, we ſat down near the road, to be within call of the coaches.

'Twas yet but the dawn of morn, when a ſtage anſwered to our wiſhes, but unfortunately there was room but for one perſon. I could not leave my faithful companion, nor would I ſuffer her to mount the top, as the poor creature, tho' trembling with fear, offered to do: yet I ſunk at the thought of being left behind, fatigued ſick, forlorn—a ſeeming outcaſt of the world—I implored we might *both* be admitted—Some charitable perſons, moved by my appearance, were liſtening to my prayers—but a female voice declaring, "ſhe was not uſed to ſuch trumpery, and would not be *incommodated* by nobody, *peticularly* a *creter* who ſeemed phtificky, and would *ſufsicate* them all by keeping up the glaſſes. Beſide, *p'rhaps* too ſhe might die in the coach, and *ſtinch* them all to death."—"Very true (replied a ſecond lady) I didn't think of that, and it doesn't matter nothing; for none but a dirty huſſey could be in *ſich* a *ſitiation*, at *ſich* a time and place."

Had not my tottering limbs and hollow voice but too well ſeconded ſuch a ſuppoſition, my emaciated frame now ſinking to the ground as

the coach drove off, and left me not a hope, but immediate death, had doubtleſs confirmed the idea.

But tho' I met not here compaſſion, it had not fled the human breaſt—and who can tell, my Lord, but Heaven allowed it to be here ſhut out, but to admit the ſtrange event that followed?

An elegant poſt chariot was paſſing the ſtage as it pauſed; and overhearing the foregoing dialogue, the two gentleman within it, immediately ſtopped, and giving way to thoſe feelings of generoſity which ever ſway their boſoms, as inſtantly ſprung out, and caught me as I fell.

Scarcely was life reſtored me, ere a voice, whoſe tones reached my heart, exclaimed;—"Oh, Lovemore! let's quickly bear her to town, ere ſhe dies without relief!" My eyes opened to ſuch congenial ſounds: but ſoon to cloſe again, when the yet dubious morning light faintly diſplayed a form that alone could anſwer ſuch a promiſe. I ſcreamed—and once more loſing all trace of recollection, recovered but to new aſtoniſhment and wonder: and let me for once too ſay, to what unuſual happineſs.—Sophia begged a reſpite, on entering this (which ſhe ſtyled) the moſt affecting and intereſting part of her narrative; and I conſented to defer my curioſity till evening, when ſhe has promiſed to reſume and conclude her hiſtory.

Do

Do you not gueſs, Lord Elmour, whoſe "anſwering form" thoſe "congenial ſounds" announced? yet the poor girl awoke to "delight and happineſs," as to "wonder"—O love! deception! woman! credulity! congenial ſounds indeed! I fear me never more to ſeparate.

Sir George Lovemore too—how has he aided—but what wonder he—if Grandby could thus—Elmour; Grandby has ſickened me to life, to myſelf—let me conclude this adventure; and then tired and diſguſted with a world, whoſe deceits and diſappointments have rendered my boſom dead to confidence and pleaſure; I will for ever fly it, and give over the ſearch of happineſs below.

LETTER LXXX.

Lady Eglington to Mrs. Boothby.

THIS, my friend, is heavier than all the reſt—for who expected—who could have believed it poſſible! Mira has fled from her parents, her family——and with Grandby! (who elſe had power to ſway her to ſuch an action?) Grandby, the plighted huſband of another—whoſe very phrenzy was, perhaps, aſſumed to ſoften and ſeduce her.

Do you not wonder at my calmneſs? Alas! I am inured to ſorrows: the ſtrokes have ſo

ſuddenly ſucceeded each other, that my callous'd heart—Ah no! though I am ſtupified, my heart feels this blow more ſenſibly than all. Never more will Mira know peace—— ſhe was before not happy, but muſt be miſerable now: ſhe knows to feel her fault, and her life will ſtill be the ſacrifice to ſenſibility. But how different will now be its cloſing ſcene, and my regrets! No longer Mira the example of her ſex—with her falls its brighteſt ornament, and when ſhe failed, who ſhall hope to overcome its weakneſſes!

Her father will not ſurvive this ſtroke—— His Mira was the vital thread on which he hung, and his preſent deluſion will but increaſe the pang when it vaniſhes. Can you believe it, Mrs. Boothby? He is ſo infatuated, (alas! I once little imagined his opinion of Mira could be ſtiled infatuation,) no—he will not allow the poſſibility of her eloping with Grandby. Dreading the conſequence of his thus deceiving himſelf, I urged the exceſs of her affection for Grandby—the ſoftneſs of her heart, unable to endure the woes ſhe brought on him; repeated all ſhe had ſaid in mitigation of the offence ſhe imputed ſolely to his love for her, and the probability that his unbounded influence had leſſened its importance in her eye, (if not totally diſpelled its appearance,) though ſhe ventured not at ſwaying us in his favour. The leaſt intimation of ſuch a thing throws him in an agony of paſſion: he cannot

cannot bear the ſuppoſition, and, for the firſt time ſince our happy union, (happineſs interrupted alone by our children's threatening fortunes,) for the firſt time he has directed words of anger and reproach to me.

"What unworthy ideas!" (he exclaims) "Mira—my Mira ſo loſt to herſelf and to me! Oh, Madam! if you can for a moment admit the thought, you are unworthy the ſweeteſt treaſure a mother ever poſſeſſed. Recal to your ungrateful heart the unparallelled examples you have from her birth received of the nobleſt love, duty, fortitude, and of every virtue that could excite a parent's wonder and applauſe; and ſhall all be forgotten now, and loſt in a baſe ſuſpicion unworthy her, unworthy you! My angel girl! and is all your mother's experience and affection come to this!"

"Where then can ſhe be, Sir Charles? What has become of her? and where—where ſhall I ſeek my child?"

"Heaven only knows! My heart bleeds for the uncertainty of her ſituation, but is conſoled by the reflection, that, wherever ſhe is, ſhe is my daughter ſtill—my own unequalled—ſpotleſs Mira!"

Is not this infatuation, my friend! Yet what can I do, but dread its approaching diſſolution?

But where has my diſtraction led me? I have not yet informed you of particulars.

After the affecting viſit Grandby paid us, a viſit in which he confeſſed his connection with the poor Sophia, Mira continued in a ſtate of almoſt equal diſtraction. "Grandby loſt to himſelf—to the world, as well as to her—Grandby driven to madneſs by his attachment to her!"— were the only words ſhe uttered. The next day Lord Sedley left us, unable to ſupport the ſpeaking looks of the ſweet ſtatue of deſpair—and we ſoon after heard that Grandby, unattended, had vaniſhed, no one knew whither. His uncle was hourly expected to adviſe about his ſituation.

Juſt as Lord Sedley went away, Sir Charles received moſt extraordinary letters (I incloſe them) from Sir George Lovemore—You were not miſtaken in his character: ſuch a combination of good and bad never united before. That a man who can thus greatly act, ſhould think thus lightly! We were almoſt conquered by the firſt letter, but the hopes of him that raiſed, were daſhed by the blindneſs and perſiſting obſtinacy of the ſecond. Though her father on thoſe ſubjects ever deals openly with his daughters, he judged it beſt yet to conceal this matter from Amelia, leſt her expectations being kept the more alive, the diſappointment that muſt probably enſue, ſhould be the more ſevere.

At this time Sir Charles was called ſome diſtance from home by the earneſt ſolicitation of his particular friend, Mr. Storer, who,

you

you know, has long been perplexed by law-ſuits, and a whole contending family. All parties conſented to the reference he made to Sir Charles, but, for various reaſons, 'twas requiſite he ſhould be on the ſpot. This was very inconvenient: he ſeldom can travel far, and the ſituation of his mind, dwelling on the late affecting ſcenes, and the apprehenſions of the ſtorm gathering now about himſelf, threatened a return of the gout. Yet the intereſts of ſociety, of humanity, of friendſhip, called, and were not to be neglected. He determined on ſetting off immediately, and I, dreading his being attacked by his diſorder before he might return, inſiſted on accompanying him. Mira had been ordered by the phyſicians to take as much exerciſe as ſhe could bear without abſolute fatigue: ſhe promiſed to continue the practice during our little abſence, and Amelia the greateſt care and attention to her ſiſter. With heavy heart I left my lovely girls.

Ah, Mira! could I apprehend deception from that face—that heart—that air of artleſs ſincerity and ſweetneſs! from that affection diſſolving at a ſeparation ſo limited and trifling! But now—but now, Mira when may we meet again!

Amelia uſually accompanied her ſiſter in her excurſions, but on the ſecond day of our abſence was prevented by a cold, and Mira ſet out in the chariot, attended by her own

maid and one footman. Hours beyond the uſual periods paſſed without her appearing: night came on, and no Mira—no tidings—judge of her ſiſter's—her poor ſiſter's ſituation! The dear girl, though ill, flew diſtracted about the park—the gardens, raving for her ſiſter, and every ſervant, every creature about diſperſed for intelligence. They were laſt ſeen (near duſk) on the London road, but after, all enquiries were vain: and what could the terrified Amelia and domeſtics now think, or do? The houſe-keeper could not at midnight bring her from the road where ſhe waited for her ſiſter, or ſome new and equally vague information with the laſt. Lady Melcome was then ſent for, and the delirious girl forced into the houſe. Her Ladyſhip, the next morning, wrote me the terrible account.

Sir Charles's meditation and influence had by this brought the affairs he was upon into a favourable train, but fatigue, added to anxiety of mind, had (as I feared would be the caſe) haſtened the gouty fit, which this news but tended to confirm. I actually believe my ſuſpicions of Mira, though they enraged, yet aſſiſted him in reſiſting, and in ſome meaſure overcoming the diſorder: he ſoon grew better, and we returned by gentle ſtages home. Oh my feelings on entering the gates! The ſervants met us—Amelia was very ill—her cold had increaſed by expoſure to the night air, but ſhe had ſuffered more from anxiety and terror.

ror. The houſe was all uproar and confuſion, yet ſeemed a deſart to me: my Mira, its loveliеſt ornament, was not there—had fled it—was gone for ever!

The poor Amelia—ſhe accuſed herſelf—Wherefore? Our acquittal in part eaſed the depreſſion of her heart. Mira had taken nothing with her: her flight was not—could not be premeditated—I judge ſhe met by chance the wandering Grandby, and in an unguarded moment was prevailed upon to fly with him—(good Heaven!) from us! and whither!

* * * *

I have not been miſtaken. This morning a young peaſant, who lives five miles from hence, was brought in by one of the meſſengers ſtill on enquiry. His anſwers and confuſion had raiſed ſuſpicion of his knowing more, and between promiſes and threats he was now forced along. At length we induced him to confeſs, that, working in a field near the road, he ſaw a chariot ſtopped by a gentleman on horſeback, who inſtantly alighting, went into the carriage, and converſed ſome time with a lady in it. He was then called by a ſervant, and the gentleman aſked him if that houſe (pointing to one at a little diſtance) was his? Being anſwered in the affirmative, he deſired him to run and get him every thing ready to write a letter immediately, and a man and horſe to carry it, promiſing to reward him well,

well, would he quick: he was in haſte—the greateſt haſte. He ran home acroſs the fields, and the chariot arrived directly after him; but the gentleman was much diſappointed on hearing there was no paper in the houſe. He ordered, however, ſome milk for the lady and a woman with her, for he ſaid they were to travel all night. She trembled, and ſeemed much frightened, but drank the milk notwithſtanding, and eat ſome of the bread. The gentleman then mounting his horſe, begged her to keep up her ſpirits, which ſhe promiſed him to do, and they drove off full ſpeed. The young man declared he had often ſeen Miſs Eglington, and was ſure it was ſhe: he did not know Mr. Grrndby, but deſcribed his perſon in the gentleman's exactly.

I looked at Sir Charles—I expected this account would have unſettled his opinions. Amazing, my friend! he was not the leaſt diſconcerted—but reading in my face my ſentiments, he ſtill expreſſed the ſame diſapprobation as before, and firm reliance on the conduct of his daughter. 'Tis evident the letter which they wiſhed to write was not deſigned for us; for they had many opportunities, had that been their intention.

Cruel Mira! Not even a thought for a diſtracted ſiſter—for us! Oh what a change was here!

'Tis with difficulty I have written thus far—My head ſwims—my heart—Oh my heart!

Yet

Yet break not for a moment—ſtay till deluſion can no longer, then with a dying huſband———

LETTER LXXXI.

Lord Sedley to Lord Elmour.

MY expectation has been indeed fulfilled —and how fulfilled! "Affecting! intereſting!" Oh, Elmour—are we but mean't as puppets on this earth; and our opinions, reſolutions, paſſions, but the ſuperior agency, or ſecret ſprings by which we're danced about? Away with moralizing now—away with any thing from me—Mira's *here*, my Lord—*here* in this very houſe! and in one word, Grandby—but no—you ſhall be led as I was ſtep by ſtep thro' this amazing wilderneſs of error, which tho' the ſun of truth at length has pierced through, ſo many dubious ſhadows yet are hovering over!

Sophia was but beginning to tell me, that on recovering, ſhe found herſelf in the chariot between the two gentlemen—Diana at their feet;—when ſhe was ſuddenly interrupted in her ſtory, by the appearance of Mr. Grandby at the door—We were both ſurpriſed; and agitated by ſo unexpected an appearance, but Grandby's meditating look as he gazed, ſeemed to declare had any thing the power to affect

fect him now, he had been equally aſtoniſhed at ſeeing us together.

Sophia, tho' ſeemingly moſt affected, was the firſt to break ſilence—ſhe ſprung forward, and throwing herſelf into his arms, wept bitterly on his neck, while ſhe ſobbed out—"Do I then once more behold you! do you once more remember the poor Sophia, and your once-loved Edmund! Oh, Grandby! what have I done to deſerve, and at ſuch a time to deſerve this neglect!"—He preſſed her to his boſom—Neglect you, my Sophia! and, when moſt now you need conſolation!—Impoſſible! yet I have—I have—but impute it not to me:—I have been ill, my Sophia—very ill: calamity has ſeverely viſited your friend! But in the firſt interval of recollection, I thought on you; on your boy; and flew to finiſh all that duty, all that the fondeſt affection could." During this addreſs, ſhe raiſed her head from his ſhoulder—her hand ſtill reſted on it; (the other preſſing his, as it hung) and a ſpeechleſs agony, for a time, took poſſeſſion of her features, as ſhe traced the changes, which *that calamity* had worked in thoſe of her friend. Her grief found utterance——

"*Sickneſs! calamity!* Ah, what veſtiges have they left behind! But what was the cauſe? and why was I left in ignorance, when you know I wou'd have forgotten, or lain aſide my own, to have attended to yours? But they are now fled—you are better—you are recovered"——

"Ah

" Ah no! I am undone—Sophia; I am undone—and cannot acquaint you why—But ſurely Lord Sedley—elſe, wherefore his preſence here? He has informed you: then tell me, Sophia, (for yet he he will refuſe unhappy me) tell, tell me what I have done to be thus wretched!"—She liſten'd—gazed on him—he went on. " If, indeed, I have (as you ſo often repeat) protected, ſerved, loved you; I implore you by the affection you once bore his loſt unhappy father, and that you ſtill bear your little Edmund, quickly to inform me (while yet I may comprehend you) all you have learned; ſpeak—Oh wherefore am I thus!

" What do you mean (reply'd Sophia) what ſhou'd I know! Lord Sedley has told me nothing. Look not thus—you terrify"—He look'd rage and deſpair—and as nothing of wandering then appeared, to what cou'd I charge a behaviour that had not even ſought to conceal his connection with Sophia; while he ſeem'd, (or pretended to ſeem) ſurpriſed at its conſequence; Unleſs, he was indeed ſo ſteel'd by depravity, as to conſider all vice and immorality but as empty ſounds, that merited not attention. Poſſeſſed by this idea, he no longer rais'd compaſſion in my boſom, now filled by diſguſt and abhorrence, as by diſappointment before, while contemplating the hapleſs victim of his atrocious villainy and arts.

What

What wonder then, when once more in a deceptious and inſinuating ſtrain of blended anger, of deſpair, and woe, he by turns demanded, and implored an explanation. I ſhould ſhake off with violence the viperous touch of his hand from mine, as with equal paſſion I exclaimed—" Away, infamous—hardened youth! preſume not to touch, nor again aſſail me by a train of wily conduct and an artful flow of language; which have hitherto too ſucceſsfully concealed even in vice and treachery like thine! And can you aſk an explanation at the very feet of this injured innocence? and of *him*, who while he bled, could reſign to the ſhameleſs effrontery, that by daring a new affection, tho' *thus* forbidden, has by one blow levelled two guiltleſs hearts! Oh, Mira! and can you yet deplore him!" I could no more—a ſtrange diſplay of placid reſignation, and of the moſt lively aſtoniſhment ſucceeded, till the concluſion of the laſt ſentence: when—how Elmour—how ſhall I deſcribe the wonderful emanation, that, like a ſudden flaſh of lightning, darted thro' his countenance! ſomething more than human ſeem'd to ſhoot from his eyes, to my heart; and at the ſame inſtant, with a complacent ſmile, (as now ſatisfy'd) he fell ſo lifeleſs at my feet, that I thought him gone for ever!

Unaccountable, perplexing Grandby!

What change in my breaſt this had effected, had I had time to reflect, I know not—

but

but his ſituation—Sophia's (and her's almoſt equally claimed it) engroſſed me whole; and lo, my Lord! while I rang, called, ſtamped for aſſiſtance,—preceded by Mrs. O'Shaughneſſy, in bolted Mr. Williams, who, miſſing his nephew, on his arrival at the Grove, had traced him to the ſpot where he now found him extended on the grouud! Almoſt frantic with the ſhock, he bewailed his loved relation—Mrs. O'Shaughneſſy's part was not wanting to this ſcene; nor was it immediately I could get Grandby the requiſite aſſiſtance, or that the ſeverity of his fit would give way to the medical efforts uſed for his relief. At length he ſhew'd ſigns of life; but of the turn his malady would take, no certain concluſion could be drawn: he ſpoke not—ſeemed not to obſerve—A fever, however, was moſt to be expected—was moſt to be dreaded.

Mr. Williams, unable to ſupport with any conſtancy the ſight of his nephew, inſenſible to all his tears, and affection; was prevailed on by me to leave him a few moments, and endeavour at ſome compoſure. We withdrew to an adjoining apartment. Poor man! to what a new and unexpected trial was he now reſerved!

He ſoon (as I expected he would do) enquired where he was, and whether it was chance which had led Mr. Grandby to this houſe, and the ſituation he found him in? I had already formed my deſign, and this was

a time

a time not to be loſt—His heart ſo ſoftened—ſo prepared—yes: this was the very criſis of Sophia's cauſe.

" At any other ſeaſon, Mr. Williams, after what I learn, I might have feared to inform you: but at this, when Heaven has taken chaſtiſement to itſelf, and already ſo ſeverely puniſhed; ſurely you will not add to the preſſure, now bending to an untimely grave, a miſerable orphan caſt on a lonely world, with none to guide her thro' its unequal ways! If then, to fly the thorns it firſt preſented, and which ſhe no longer could ſupport and live; the guileleſs girl was led to chuſe, where in their ſtead the ſweeteſt flowers ſeemed to offer;—then Sir, if then ſtill more envenomed briars lurk'd beneath the foliage; is it compaſſion's part to drive them deeper to the heart of the poor loſt deluded? Remember your nephew too: think but on him you have juſt left extended on a bed, from whence Heaven may only permit his ever riſing to your prayers; according as your mercy bends to thoſe of its imploring victims, whom, tho' it here ſeems to abandon, it may yet avenge. Sophia——"

" Ha! Sophia! I feared to what your preparation tended—has Edmund then dared to diſobey me? Ah! my lord, you little know the anguiſh that dear, that fatal name raiſes in my boſom, or the reaſon I have to execrate all of that fiend—the villain Beavour—or you would not think me the hardened man you do!

Sophia!

Sophia! let me not hear her name—let me not ſee her—I will again fly the houſe that contains her, tho' I never more behold my nephew! ſhe guileleſs! innocent! no, no!—Has ſhe not heaped ruin upon ruin! Ah, my boy! my beſt beloved, adopted boy! loſt—gone—devoted—and by me, on her account devoted! on *her's*—fit child of her infernal father! yet all perſiſt for *her*, to whom I owe accumulated pangs, to tear afreſh my yet unhealed, bleeding wounds!"

I would have given worlds for further information, but this was no time for queſtions: his heart was full—and when almoſt deſpairing now for poor Sophia's cauſe; accident forwarded her ſtill perplexing fortune.

Mrs. O'Shaughneſſy's curioſity was no longer to be bounded: ſhe entered with a thouſand apologies, and enquired about Mr. Grandby's diſorder, which—"no offence ſhe hoped—ſhe was mortally ſure came all along of a judgment for his wilful forgettings of that dear *crature*, now breaking her heart about his ſweet face—monſter as he was!" Her continued cenſure and panegyric were ungrateful themes, and to avoid them, Mr. Williams aroſe to leave the place. A large glaſs in the oppoſite room, which was open, fronted that he was quitting, and reflecting full upon him the image of *Sophia*, there ſitting alone, pondering her griefs. He had never yet beheld her—for tho' lamenting over the body of Grandby, when he firſt arriv'd, abſorb'd by his

his own ſituation, he heeded her not—neither had ſhe, in her emotion, attended to the name ſhe afterwards trembled to learn was ſo near. He had not then beheld her till now—and good Heaven! how muſt the firſt look have affected him, when ſuch was its conſequence! He ſtarted—trembled—and in a voice ſcarce audible, exclaimed—" Ha! what art thou, viſion! angel! dæmon!" He ruſhed into the room—a livid paleneſs deaden'd his cheek—again he ſtarted back, as the wondering girl aroſe at his exclamation and entrance; then gazing on her with ſoftening looks—" Thou living ſweetneſs! yes—'tis ſhe!—'tis Sophia herſelf! Oh! where thus long—impoſſible! impoſſible! vaniſh thou ſoft deluſion—or ſay, whence, what art thou?"—Suppoſing from ſuch an effect, ſome deep intereſt was working in his breaſt; I ventured to lead her to him, and to implore him, in that weeping orphan, to pity all that was ſuffering and good. His arms ſeem'd inſtinctively to expand—but ſoon he checked her approach—

" Off—touch me not—thou baſiliſk! hide, hide her from me, ere my blood is congealed by the ſight!" Affrighted, ſhe attempted to paſs him to the door: he ſtopped her—" Yet leave me not! for after having ſeen, I cannot, cannot part with thee! Oh! thou art the revived form of all my ſoul—and art thou not his alſo!—begone—quick, quickly leave me." She threw herſelf at his feet, her eyes

ſurcharged

ſurcharged with tears: her cheek reviving with hope and expectation, and her boſom having with emotions never felt before.

" Oh, Sir! bid me not away:—I cannot now obey you. Kill me—but never bid me leave you more. And oh! that I had ſtill wept unſeen, unknown,—that I had dy'd rather than thus to afflict you! Yes:—I could die for you—oh! believe me!—'tis the ſentiment now riſing in my ſoul, ſtrengthened by duty;—ſoftened by affection; prompts me!"

" What ſhall I do! (returned the agitated man—now inclining to preſs her to his heart—now preventing her embrace) I, too, feel myſelf irreſiſtibly led to receive in you all that remains of my Sophia—my loved—lamented wife! But oh—horror! (and he daſhed her from him) thou art alſo his, who robbed me of her: to whom I owe her loſs."

" Oh God! can you then tell me of my mother! your wife! robbed! Oh! my father—now, now are all your myſterious words fully explained. And ah! too well, Sir, is your former treatment of me alſo now accounted for—Yes—you muſt ſtill abhor me;—yet, if I indeed am the unhappy orphan of her you loved; if indeed I reſemble your Sophia in form, as well as wretched fortune; oh! for her ſake, forgive, and caſt not from your feet, her child! ſure, ſure ſhe was innocent, you loved—and often would my poor father, while recollection wrung his heart, repeat, he had

wronged

wronged my mother, and in her the ſweeteſt innocence, and beſt of women. Nay, while he ſtrained me to his boſom—called her a murdered ſaint, and would invoke her bleſſed ſpirit to guard from appehended harms her hapleſs daughter. Then, will you perſiſt in hating me, ſhe bore! I, who would die ere offend you! Alas, what do I ſay—I have: I have: yet 'twas before I ſaw, or I never had diſobeyed.—Oh! Sir, forgive me in that *one inſtance:* in that but too ſeverely am I already puniſhed. Oh! if you knew what I have undergone—what I now feel; you would pity, and not plunge me, by your continued frown, to abſolute deſpair."

Elmour, had you beheld the ſuppliant mourner, you had ſcarcely, better than poor Williams or myſelf, borne the foregoing ſcene. I ſaw irreſolution ſtill tearing his heart ſtrings aſunder, and for the preſent reſolved to let his conflicting paſſions take their own courſe; reſerving myſelf in caſe they ſhould purſue an unfriendly bias. Some time he continued ſilent, Sophia kiſſing and bathing his hand with her tears: her eyes beaming up to his for compaſſion. The pauſe was not unfavourable.—"Riſe, riſe Sophia: kill me not longer by looks, by a voice that calls up to my ſoul all its long-hidden, though, never-to-be-forgotten woes.—And have you ſuffered, Sophia! it was not my intention.—Alas! I never could think of you a moment, but as the child of him

him who wrecked me in early life, and madneſs followed the idea, which I endeavoured ever to diſperſe.—No, dear innocent—you never have offended me: or, if in *that one inſtance*—Ah! my unhappy boy! but calm your ſorrows—I mean not to upbraid—if you have erred, I too—why did I precipitate—or, why did I not behold you ſooner? Perhaps—but I more and more afflict you—Oh! ſtop, Sophia, add not thus to my deep diſtreſs, for I cannot now unmoved behold your griefs."

"Ah, Sir! what a motive do you give me for attempting their ſuppreſſion? The hand of Heaven has been heavy on me: yet, in this threatening moment of even increaſing woes, my heart feels eaſed of much of its wonted preſſure, by the hope you give me of forgiveneſs.—If when you know"——I interrupted Sophia from a further explanation of her ſituation, at a time I judged an improper one, after all that had paſſed. We had already made great progreſs—more might have thrown us back.—Mr. Williams's feelings had been ſufficiently exerciſed. The heart of Grandby, while perhaps ceaſing to beat, was not in conſequence of Sophia's continuation to be laid open to a fond relation, who, tho' yet ignorant of its offences, might not at this inauſpicious period bear the truth; and Sophia, as the imputed cauſe of its imagined dereliction from virtue, might, notwithſtanding her late ſucceſs, be once more the ſacrifice.

I drew

I drew Mr. Williams's attention from the laſt-touched object, but it would not long wander from the loved ideas of the loſt Sophia, now forced on his recollection, by her living emblem before him. Sophia eagerly liſtened to whatever fell from lips that could inform her ought of a mother, ſo little known; and was inſenſibly led to queſtions, which drew from Mr. Williams briefly (for he could not bear to dwell long on his wrongs) the following particulars, which I ſhall as briefly throw together, my lord, for your information. You will afterwards repeat with me—"Where now ſhall conjecture reſt?" and with Williams —"That the writhing pains of an endleſs ſuſpence are yet more inſupportable than the fixed ones certainty gives."

Being the ſon of a younger brother, Mr. Williams in early life ſail'd a ſea-officer in the Eaſt-India Company's ſervice; and 'twas his fortune in one of thoſe voyages (when with Captain Beavour) to meet with Miſs Anſill, then going out to a relation in Bombay, with whom he ſoon fell violently in love: nor was it long before he had reaſon to believe himſelf happy in a mutual return. The lady was ſo extremely beautiful and accompliſhed, that Mr. Williams was not her only conqueſt: and, as is often the caſe in thoſe long voyages, a rivalry commenced on board, which rendered the ſituation very diſagreeable—particularly to the lovers, who were thereby precipitated

not

not only to an early declaration, but other more important meaſures.

The only competitor to be dreaded was Captain Beavour himſelf—formidable indeed, by his ſituation and power.—He was naturally captious, malicious, vindictive, and having ſo much reaſon for diſcontent, (the young lady's diſtinction could not be diſguiſed) the diſpoſitions of his heart were continually arouſed.

Mr. Williams, too, was rather violent in his paſſions.—Thus open to every attack the bolts of envy and jealouſy could hourly throw, what wonder a temper leſs ardent than his had reſented? He was threatened—inſulted; retorted—and was at length forbidden the cabin.

The evident deſign of this meaſure was to ſeparate the lovers—in vain: to render all ſecure, beyond the power of the deſigning Beavour, or that of any other threatening influence; Miſs Anſill conſented to an inſtant union: the chaplain on board agreeing to marry them, on condition of the ſecret's being carefully guarded till all fear of Captain Beavour's revenge ſhould end with the voyage.

Mr. Williams, now happy, ſecure, determined to bear his affronts with patience till his quitting the ſhip: well might he be tranquil, while love rewarded his forbearance—but this was of ſhort duration: ſomething of an interview was detected—Beavour was enraged, and Mr. Williams confined to his cabin in irons for three days: the ſhip then anchor-

ing at the Cape, he was releaſed, but forbid the Captain's preſence.

The lady's ſituation, during this period may be eaſily imagined. She was taken on ſhore by Captain Beavour: her huſband followed, and, by raſhly challenging his commander to a duel, while yet in his power, laid the unfortunate train of miſchief that enſued.

The meſſage was not honoured with the leaſt attention: if ever known to the wife, is doubtful: or whether ſhe was kept in ignorance of the deſign againſt her huſband, during their ſtay at the Cape. She was conveyed ſomewhere up the country, where he could learn nothing about her; and he dared not to demand her. This, when too late, he ever deplored; but he judged (now grown cool by reflection) 'twas better to defer that meaſure, till the ſhip's arrival in India ſhould at once releaſe him from his engagements to her, and from the Captain's tyranny.

As he was not allowed to attend the duties of his ſtation, and all were forbid to converſe with him, he knew very little of the operations on board, but by conjecture—Good God! what muſt the poignancy of his ſituation have been, when looking out of his window one morning, on his firſt riſing, he miſſed the ſhip! ſhe had ſailed in the night, with a favourable wind, and was quite out of ſight by day break.

The ſtate of madneſs to which he was nearly reduced by this heart-rending occurrence, did

did not prevent his purpoſe of following in the firſt veſſel for India—A veſſel did not immediately offer: the weather forbade—a fortnight elapſed; and then loudly proclaiming his wrongs, and vowing revenge, he ſet out in purſuit of his wife.

Continual ſtorms conſiderably lengthened the voyage, and awakened all his fears for the ſafety of a life he valued ſo far beyond his own. In vain, at the firſt ſight of the harbour opening on his view, and of the veſſels there at anchor, would his eyes have explored that which contained the treaſure he had loſt—No intelligence had yet arrived—Day after day; week after week—months elapſed; while hope, ſuſpenſe, deſpair, conflicted in the boſom of the wretched Williams, till a violent fever flattered him with a releaſe; that was however, deny'd him: he recovered—and recovered but to the dreadful certainty of learning, that Captain Beavour's ſhip had been wrecked in a ſtorm, and that every ſoul on board had periſhed with her, except one ſailor, who brought the intelligence to one of the neighbouring ſettlements.

Mr. Williams did not himſelf attempt a deſcription of his feelings——he flew from the dread recollection. Suffice it, to inform your Lordſhip, that all his hopes in life buried—indolence ſucceeded—he long wandered about without a plan, or deſign in view, and almoſt unconſcious of his own exiſtence.

—He had, however, many friends; and in deſpite of an aſſumed, or rather wiſhed-for appearance of miſanthropy (for his natural, was a contrary character) he daily made more. His intereſt being conſiderable, a connection with him in different branches of buſineſs was earneſtly ſought—he had a diſtaſte to every thing: but an abſolute neceſſity for his either accepting a very advantageous propoſal, or of his immediate return to England, (the very thought of which he then abhorred) obliged him to cloſe with the offer.

We daily ſee the multitude toiling for wealth, and ſee all their toiling, all their exertions vain—Mr. Williams nor laboured, nor cared—yet riches ſhowered on him in abundance; and in a very few years, he found himſelf maſter of a vaſt fortune. His partners wiſhing to retire to the enjoyment of theirs, a diviſion took place—but enjoyment was locked from the boſom of Williams. Yet he loved his ſiſter—her huſband—her family—and for them he got over his repugnance, and once more viſited his native country, where a hatred of the world, and love of mankind, ſo forcibly ſtruggled in his breaſt; and by turns directed his actions, as to form an heterogeneous mixture, that well might have puzzled the philoſopher, whether to arrange his under the claſs of cynical, or of philanthropic characters.

The tumults of his boſom daily ſubſiding, his life now paſt away a kind of "dead calm," till

till with the hour that preſented him Miſs Beavour, was reſtored him with every recollection, every ſorrow. After ſo long believing all their ſources buried in the waves; ſo ſuddenly to learn his error—" Good God! Captain *Beavour* then alive! Captain *Beavour* write to him, and intruſt to his charge a child of his! A daughter—and called by that name! Madneſs! inſult! What then had become of Sophia? Had ſhe really died as reported—or worſe"—Shall we now, my Lord, wonder at Mr. Williams's behaviour on his viſit to Captain Lane, or cenſure his ſubſequent conduct? Impoſſible! Hear now the concluſion of his relation in his own words and manner.

" You will not now, my Lord Sedley (as I hinted to you this morning), be ſurpriſed at prejudices ſo imbibed—new doubts, new perplexities—reviving feelings, but the keener nerved for ſuſpenſion—What could I do but avoid what ſo prepared the rack that inſtant drove me to madneſs? Yet even this was trifling, to the ſenſation by which my poor heart was harrowed at the ſight of Sophia—Sophia, the undoubted offſpring of my own loſt angel—Of my wife! My raviſhed wife! Of Sophia, the child of Beavour! Oh, my Lord! did ſhe, I once believed to be all my own, then leave—deſert me! And horror! receive—nay, give herſelf to a robber—My mortal foe—the man I ſo hated—had ſuch reaſon to hate! Pity me, my Lord,"——(and

his labouring heart, wrung it from mine as he ſpoke) " pity a wretch like me——Abandoned by a wife! By ſuch a———look there, my Lord! by ſuch a creature as that!—Juſt ſo her eyes beamed affection on me—juſt ſo, when tortured by barbarous rage, would the ſilent eloquence of her looks bid me be comforted!—and I loſt her—Leave me, Sophia—hang not thus upon me—Thy mother forſook—forgot me! Thou leave me to my fate. Mercy! can then the child of *Beavour* thus weep for me! and can I thus be moved by her tears! Yes—I behold, and cannot hate her—Hate! Oh the meltings of my ſoul as I trace all the wonders of my Sophia's face—of her form! Come to my arms, ſweet emblem of her I loved—Come; and while I remember in thee all of thy mother, forgotten be all of thy father—and all my wrongs die with him, as with thee revives a ſpark of happineſs long buried. Oh, Sedley! ſay, whence as I ſtrain her to my heart, thoſe wonderous emotions!"

Was I wrong, Elmour?—For, my ſoul, I could not help it—My affections were all called out by the occaſion; and reaſon—caution, at leaſt, was aſleep. I claſped, and congratulated both as they embraced; and—(yet the poſſibility had often before occurred) I raſhly, for inſpiration (the ſibyl—the God—or what you will) was ſtrong upon me; I anſwered—" from inſtinct; from nature; from heaven!

Happy,

Happy, bleſt be the hour that reſtores you to each other—that gives to you a child, to her a father—Yes; it is, it muſt be ſo—I know —I feel it is ſo."

Poor Mr. Williams! I half repented—and could but half. The thought ruſhed on him like a ſudden whirl-wind; and as that ſhakes the foreſt to its roots, ſo was his mind agitated by new convulſions. " Almighty Powers! (he cry'd) my child! mine did you ſay! How! ſpeak---what reaſon—but you have none—conjecture only: Ah no! Did not Beavour own her for his? Was ſhe not ever called by his name? Yet—Ha! ' child of the waves'—' of tempeſts'—' death!'—a ' recompenſe'—Sophia; ſay, were not thoſe the words? " the very words?---what more---quickly, what more?"---" They were, (replied the almoſt fainting Sophia) and of reſtitution too---and many, many ſuch."---She again threw herſelf " at his feet, unknowing wherefore, or what to hope: he went on---Oh, perhaps, thou art mine own!---Perhaps, while I cheriſhed revenge, I was daſhing to want---to ruin, mine own, as my Sophia's child! Yes---thoſe feelings own thee for mine, and my wife was not unfaithful---did not forget me. But again, the time---the ſtorm---Could an infant outlive the tempeſt that ſwept ſo many to their graves---and not periſh with its wretched mother! And were it poſſible, why then ſo long detained---why not ſooner, if at all, reſtored?

What ſhall I do! cruel—cruel ſuſpenſe!"—I made Sophia repeat what ſhe had told me of Mr. Beavour's long intention of ſending her to England; his many myſterious expreſſions, no doubt, explained in the loſt papers; and adviſed an enquiry, as far as poſſible, in Bengal, as well as the interior country to which he had retired. His widow too, tho' before an enemy to Sophia, might now give ſome uſeful information. He liſtened with attention—the advice pleaſed; and Oh! how he delights to dwell on the dear poſſibility, tho' uncertainty ſoon daſhes it back, and diſtracts him. Sophia too—Did you ſee how ſhe hangs on all Mr. Williams's ſurmiſes, and watches all his emotions—'tis plain ſhe wiſhes a confirmation; yet ſhe ſweetly tried to ſlide in a word for the man, ſhe believed her father; and when ſhe could not, would add—" Oh, Sir! if you knew how he repented"—Dear girl! however this may be, ſhe muſt be unhappy: her Grandby—her " loſt Grandby?"

I adviſed Sophia to defer a little longer the important ſecret, and the child was kept away. —Mr. Williams wanted reſt: yet ſmall was the proſpect of obtaining it—Grandby grew worſe at night; a reſtleſſneſs ſucceeded the firſt ſymptoms, and threatened approaching fever---it raged in his veins before morning, and ſcarce a hope of life remained. Nature, ſoon exhauſted, could no longer ſtruggle with the fury of the diſtemper—but with an univerſal

verſal weakneſs, that almoſt deprived him of the power to uſe it: reaſon returned: he knew his ſituation—recollected all that had paſt; felt his diſſolution near; and requeſted the attendance of his uncle, of Sophia, and of me. Elmour—do you not feel for the Grandby you once ſo eſteemed—ſo admired—the all-accompliſhed youth once ſo beloved, and happy? Behold him now!—" Oh, but he deſerves his fate: the betraying—the deceptive, abandoned Grandby, deſerves his fate"—yet, Elmour, behold him now!—Oh God! Oh God!—I cannot proceed: my next ſhall immediately follow.

LETTER LXXXII.

Lord Sedley in Continuation.

SILENT we approached the bed, where death might indeed behold a triumph, but for the ſmile with which his victim attended the ſummons. His head was raiſed by pillows: a calm reſignation poſſeſſed his features: his eyes looked love, compaſſion, hope—and Sophia's little boy was placed by his ſide. O! how he looked, while his dying eyes, caſt on Sophia, on her babe, ſeemed imploring for virtue and innocence oppreſſed!—feebly he ſpoke—need I explain the reſt, Sir?—" Look here—(preſenting the child) and if in diſobeying

ing I have offended, let this plead my forgiveneſs."

"Good Heaven! no, no: (ſobbed out Mr. Williams receiving the boy) I am not—I am not offended."

"Then (bowing his head, and looking thankfulneſs to Heaven) I am content: you will not forgive me alone—Sophia—"

"We are already reconciled, (ſaid Mr. Williams, embracing her) be eaſy on her account: ſhe is mine—yet wondrous Providence! I knew not how doubly ſhe was ſo, till now. O my children! my children! and can this be! what have I unknowingly done!"

"Enough, enough, my uncle.—Let us not repine:—the ways of Heaven are inexplicable; and bleſt be the hand that ſtrikes! My Lord Sedley"—he held out his hand—I received, and preſſed it to my breaſt: my heart was ſoftened—I rejoiced to behold his expiring moments thus devoted and ſerene, and on the bed of death the errors of his youth ſeemed to fade from before me—he ſaw me affected—

"Dearly Sedley—how I love you—how I revere your virtues! and feel for you now—yet—I muſt ſpeak—SEDLEY, I HAD A BROTHER: THAT IS HIS CHILD: SOPHIA IS MY SISTER—AND DEAR HAVE THEY EVER BEEN TO MY SOUL."

Can you, Elmour, expect I ſhould give you a juſt account of what immediately ſucceeded?

ed? The room reeled—I heard indiſtinct voices around me, but could diſtinguiſh nothing. I believe I was kneeling over the hand of the martyred ſaint, but they raiſed me to him, (for my ſtrength forſook me) and I found myſelf within his dying arms, where a violent flood of tears, which I attempted not ſuppreſſing, ſomewhat relieved me.

Wondrous! wondrous concatenation of events to lead—and thus when we drive on to the moſt deſtructive cataſtrophes—in ſhort, when Heaven, with an almighty power, has formed a Grandby, and we ſnatch the bleſſing from a world; we are in fond excuſe to cry—"Strange, ſtrange chance!" or "fortune"—or other nonſenſe.

I never knew, my lord, a myſterious ſilence, or ſecrecy in thoſe caſes, ever come to good—or rather, that were not productive of the worſt of evils. I decidedly in the beginning diſapproved—but after when appearances ſo ſtrongly—Piſh! what now ſignifies what I, or any one elſe did, or did not do? Let us all now ſit down, and rail at ourſelves—curſe the d—d anonymous writer, and lament our fortune. Well, what will that avail? Grandby was driven to madneſs—to death—Mira will follow: and then let us weep the *fated lovers*. But, perhaps, 'twere better to arreſt the grim tyrant, and ſimply cry with the innocent Sophia—"Do, dear Grandby, be but well, and you will now be happy." O charming! charm-

charming! my ſoul is fretted, Elmour—but to return:—

There was little occaſion (the miſchief done) for explanation: yet Grandby would aſk ſome queſtions, declaring now (eaſed of the mortal weight ſo long at his heart) he ſeemed already ſoaring to heaven. He talked of Mira—"She then yet loved—had never ceaſed to love him."—New energy—new life ſprung from the ſubject: but nature could not long ſecond the exertion: he ſunk—his eyes cloſed never we feared again to open: but once more he breathed—ſilence and reſt were preſcribed, and we were torn from his bed. "O Grandby! if in proſperity I loved you, in adverſity pitied; ſcarcely could hate, when I believed you guilty: what now became of me, when with added love, compaſſion, and wonder, I left you without a hope of ſeeing you again."

'Twas ſome time ere I had an opportunity of engaging Sophia for an hour; ſhe had much to inform Mr. Williams, who (ſhe told me) frequently wept at her ſtory, and lamented the violent conduct in himſelf, which in remorſe he ſtyled—"the corner ſtone, on which had been erected this whole pile of error and misfortune." "But ah! my lord, (ſhe continued) could you then be ſo deceived in Mr. Grandby? and did you never happen to hear of his younger brother? I thought you talked very oddly juſt before he fell in the fit, but

but I was then ſo frightened I could not aſk your meaning, and what after happened, quite engroſſed me. Grandby neglect—betray me! O! 'twas he relieved—protected—and reconciled me to life again. But for him, I had long quitted the world: but for him my infant had never beheld it. 'twas he who raiſed me from death on the road, when the ſtage refuſed to receive me—nor from that moment till the time recollection forſook him, has Grandby once ceaſed to be my friend—my guardian! and now, and now in return, 'tis I have undone him—'tis I who, after the ruin I brought on his brother, precipitate him to deſtruction too.—Let me—let me but live to to ſee the work accompliſhed;—to ſee him die, and then break—break my heart to relieve me." After a burſt of paſſion, at my intreaty, ſhe proceeded.

" When on recovering, I found myſelf ſeated in the chariot, I attempted to thank the two gentlemen for their timely aſſiſtance; but my tears when I looked up to him on my right hand (and I could not a moment together refrain) perpetually ſtopped my utterance. They both ſoothed me—yet ſtill I wept—' Ah! my dear *Miſsè*, (cried Diana) I know what ails you ſo—that gentleman's face—O my God! (clapping her hands before her eyes) it frightens me! I believe in my very ſoul he be Mr. Grandby himſelf!' ' Mr. Grandby! (exclaimed the other ſtranger) why he is Mr. Grandby.'

Grandby.' 'Ah no, Sir! (Diana replied)—not *that* Mr. Grandby—he is gone to India—to my country—and I wiſh from my heart we had never left it.' I had not time to check the imprudent girl's loquacity, ere he call'd out—'O Heaven! my brother! his wife! have I at length found you—thus found you! O Sophia! wherefore did you fly me, and thus conceal yourſelf from my ſearch? And ah! what has happened ſince my brother's departure to occaſion this diſtreſs—this ſhocking ſituation!' Conceive, my lord, my aſtoniſhment at ſuch an addreſs—conceive its increaſe, and my joy, when in one of my new friends I not only found my Grandby's brother, but in him the very friend and guardian he had promiſed—yes: 'twas *him*—'twas to his brother he alluded when he left me: 'twas him—'twas his brother he bade me love—not the impoſtor Grange, who, after inſinuating himſelf into his confidence, had worked the intelligence to his vile purpoſe, and then attempted to infuſe in me ſuſpicions, which, bleſſed be Heaven, he never could effect.

" Mr. Grandby, on enquiring for me, was told by Mrs. Brown (the wicked abettor of Grange) that I had quitted her houſe that very day with a young gentleman, who had frequently viſited me before; and that ſhe had heard me hurrying my maid in the morning, leſt the gentleman Mr. Grandby had promiſed to ſend, ſhould arrive before ſhe could fly him.

him. The only ſatisfaction he could obtain, on his evident ſurpriſe and curioſity at this ſtrange account, was a ſhrug, a ſhake of the head, and a ſignificant '*Ah, Sir*!' with which he was obliged to depart.

" Here was a train, my lord—Mr. Grandby knew not what to do: he could not now write to his brother, whom he had promiſed to guard me from his uncle's reſentment, and from every want and harm. The generous youth had (tho' he blamed his brother's precipitate conduct) adviſed a ſtrict ſecrecy, for well he knew Mr. Williams's inflexible temper and perſeverance in this affair; and he dreaded nothing ſo much as a diſinheritance, which, tho' ſo evidently to his own perſonal advantage, muſt tend to the ruin of an only brother, whom he loved ſo well.

" Thrown off my guard by this wonderful meeting, and happy explanation, I informed Mr. Grandby (tho' in preſence of a ſtranger) of the cruel deception practiſed by Grange, in order to the accompliſhment of his own villainous deſigns. They both wept; execrated; and vowed vengeance.—'Twas then I repented, for the violence of Sir George Lovemore frightened me. I never could find out particulars, but ſomething did paſs; for Grange, by more of his ſecret intelligence, cauſed Mr. Grandby ſome trouble with his uncle, which however he had fortunately the addreſs to get over, without either offending him, or betraying his brother.

" He

" He was yet at Oxford; and that I might be near him, and ſafe from any further machinations of Grange, he placed me in thoſe lodgings with Mrs. O'Shaughneſſy—a worthy heart, tho ſo ſimple and curious in her manner, that I have been equally at a loſs to guard my ſecret from friendſhip like hers, or to truſt to ſuch doubtful diſcretion. I was ſenſible there were many ſurmiſes about my ſituation; but conſcious of my own innocence, and of the honour of him for whom I ſuffered, I committed myſelf to Heaven, and to the advice of my Grandby's amiable brother, who ever conſoled me by the ſweeteſt aſſurances of affection and eſteem, and of my huſband's integrity, whom, tho' he declared I was already lawfully married to, ſince we both intended, and believed ourſelves to be ſo; would yet on his return repeat the ceremony as ordained by the church: and as ſoon as our affairs permitted, proſecute Grange. Thus ſooth'd by affection, and lulled by hope, I wept and ſmiled alternately over my babe, and ſtill looked forward; till ſome time elapſing without any letters, I began to harbour fears that daily increaſed. Mr. Grandby, who had now left the Univerſity, at firſt chid my apprehenſions, but after, owned he began to entertain them himſelf—eſpecially from the time of General Matthews's capture, on which fatal expedition 'tis probable his wretched brother ſerved—and whoſe ſimilar fate—ah! ſave me,

me, my lord, from the dread idea—my huſband—my ſlaughtered huſband! barbarous! perfidious tyrants! yes, my lord—he fell one of the martyrs of that ſhocking day—and chance diſcovered (for Mr. Grandby *could* not inform me) this laſt of fortune's malice.

" Still 'twas Mr. Grandby's wiſh to conceal from his uncle what he could of this ſad cataſtrophe—not for his feelings ſake alone, (for was not he the original cauſe?) but leſt a change of will ſhould follow; and he yet would not only flatter himſelf ſometimes with hope, but bid me not to deſpair Vain expectation! idle hope! expectation—hope—happineſs—all are no more—all are dead with Grandby, and ſoon to overtake him my only conſolation.

" My child's intereſts and good were my laſt of earthly views—Mr. Grandby, whom, ſince my misfortune I had ſeen but once, and never after heard of, I believed had given me up—yet 'was wonderful indeed! for how had he ever *looked*—how had he ever talked, as he regarded Sophia and her child! but he was engaged on his approaching marriage—I knew his fortune, on compariſon with Miſs Eglington's, deficient, and—his brother was no more—forgive me, Grandby! forgive me, Heaven!—for to have doubted thy nobleſt repreſentative on earth, was ſurely to offend thee!

" Sir George Lovemore once, without any explanation, ſent me a bank note, which I fear

fear I too abruptly returned—He certainly knew of his friend's ſituation, and apprehended my ſuffering in conſequence. If ſo, how reprehenſible has been my conduct! but I felt deſerted—my heart, my reaſon were weakened. I reſolved to endeavour my own, and child's ſupport, while yet I lived. All idea of Mr Williams, and his reſentments, had fled before me—I thought not of him, till this eventful morning, when his preſence inſpired ſuch emotion, as I believed for ever dead in my boſom: what they were, I can't deſcribe —but no ſooner had I beheld, than my heart informed me his intereſts were connected with, and his good opinion dear to it.

"Thus, my lord, you find me from infancy linked with misfortune—all that were any way connected with the fated Sophia ſeemed doomed alike to partake her ſorrows: and Grandby—muſt he too die before me!—and only becauſe he was my friend! O God, avert it! in mercy avert it—and let mine be ſtill the devoted head."

Poor Sophia! Ah! Elmour—*fated* indeed! the brothers—Mira—all hung on her eventful deſtiny: and with her they fall.

Scarce had Sophia concluded, ere a meſſage from Grandby hurried me to him, rejoicing he yet lived to our prayers. He ſeemed, if poſſible, yet more exhauſted, but quite ſenſible and calm.

"How good, my lord—I had a favour to requeſt—but ere I could make it, you had left me

me. Perhaps you will not approve it"—my aſſurances were interrupted by my emotions —I could not ſpeak.

" Dear Sedley! (he preſſed my hand) how could I ever miſtruſt you? But tell me—have you yet written to Eglington Hall?"

" I attempted it; but the pen dropped from my hand—I waited the ſucceſs of this hour. I hoped the reſt we left you to——I flattered myſelf"—he ſigh'd.——

" Ah no!—Perhaps 'tis better ſo, after the cruel malady—But I have not time to loſe—My Lord, if you think I have undeſervedly ſuffered; if, after a time of bittereſt anguiſh, you wiſh me to die in peace; Sedley, indulge me—be my advocate—Plead for your dying friend, and let my eyes behold her, ere they cloſe for ever. Fear not to diſtreſs her—I know her well: ſhe will wiſh to ſee me—to receive my parting ſigh—hear my laſt words, while faultering the repeat—' Mira, be happy —weep no more—for Grandby was innocent.' Will you, my Lord—will you indulge me?

" I will—I will fly to bring her: you ſhall ſee her—and the God of Mercies yet——

" Ah! Sedley—Do not flatter her: haſten, my friend, ere too late, and heaven ſucceed your ſteps."

Attended by a ſingle ſervant I rode full ſpeed, and fortunately (for I feared there might be no time to ſpare) met Miſs Eglington, and her woman, in a poſt-chaiſe, ſome miles from Eglington-

lington Hall. Elmour, what a taſk was mine to impart the double diſcovery—But what a woman! Never were ſtrength of mind, and ſoftneſs of heart, ſo divinely blended—I bade her prepare for important intelligence: I began with the worſt—owned Grandby was ill—very ill. Ah, Grandby! could I have died for you, and but Mira have thus felt—No, no: that you might live for her, tho' I ſhould ſurvive to behold it!

"Bring me to him, my Lord, (cried the angel) let me once ſee him, ere he dies—Oh I muſt not—Heavens! I muſt not—But I will haſten back to my ſiſter's arms, and there die too.

Be not too much alarm'd: he may recover: yet he wiſhes to ſee you—Mira will not refuſe him—You are his—he has a right—

Good God! my Lord—a right! and this from you! Ah do not—do not abet me in error——

Appearances might have been miſtaken—had not Grandby a brother? Perhaps, Sophia—Grandby may yet be innocent!"—Oh for a Raphael's pencil!—But never will that look be equalled but by that other—'twas ſiſter of the one which Grandby gave me, when his firſt perception of the error, ſtruck him lifeleſs at my feet.—She took my full meaning—

"He is innocent—and he dies!—Bleſſed! bleſſed hour! My Grandby is yet mine—he

is

is not loſt to me for ever—We will yet be united: he dies; but he, and eternity, are all my own! Let us fly, my Lord: let me hear him ſay, he is *guiltleſs*, and my ſoul ſhall aſcend with his to heaven on the ſound!"—— I could ſcarcely equal her impatience: we but ſtopped to write an explanatory note to Amelia—her parents were from home; and could not (had there been either time or occaſion,) have been conſulted. We rode poſt; and Mira, without the leaſt apparent fatigue, accompliſhed the journey.

Sophia and Mr. Williams met us at the door: their looks declared, Grandby but lived —The two ladies flew into each others arms: "Ah, (cried Sophia) is this the lady I have made unhappy! Think not of me (Mira replied, as ſhe entered) may your example, in yet greater trials, teach me to bear my own— to ſupport this dreadful moment"——My Lord——and ſhe motioned towards the ſtairs. Mr. Williams was already preparing Grandby—I led her on—Oh, Elmour! my heart ſeemed breaking as I led her to her expiring Grandby! A conſcious fear alſo—why did I interfere? tho' well intended, my viſit to Sophia haſtened the explanation that brought on this cruel criſis. Had I ſuſpended my enquiry, Heaven, in ſome other way, perhaps, had cleared thoſe myſterious doubts. 'Twas this occurred, and ſickened my ſoul as the couch of death opened to Mira's view, and Grandby,

by, with a languid ſmile, preſented her that hand (now cold and lifeleſs), which, when he left her to wipe away a ſiſter's tears, ſhe fondly hoped had ſoon been offered at a far other altar than that which death had now prepared.

She kneeled—ſhe raiſed her gliſtening eyes to heaven—but ſhe did not weep. "My God! I thank thee that in this hour I am not quite undone—that if I am to love him—yet, Oh, in mercy, ſpare me! Oh, Grandby, is it thus we meet!

For awhile, my Mira, we part—but for a ſlitting moment: we will ſoon be bleſt again. I already feel the tranquil ſhade caſt over me, gently ſtealing away my ſenſes to eternal reſt. I wiſhed only for this laſt farewell—I have beheld you, and I die content. You, Mira, on this laſt trial accompliſh the hope you ever gave of bright perfection; and I already feel a foretaſte of the joys preparing to crown our virtue and our love."—Mira liſtened, and her countenance aſſumed a ſweet compoſure—The lovely maid affected not forms, that ſuch a ſituation might diſpenſe with—ſhe had embraced him as ſhe firſt ſpoke; and his head ſtill reſted on her arm, while her lovely face bent over him as ſhe kneeled. He obſerved the full effects of his laſt wiſh,—an heavenly ſmile evinced his ſatisfaction, as he cloſed his eyes, and calmed on his Mira's boſom, ſeemed giving up his ſoul (doubtleſs fatigued by ſpeaking)

ſpeaking) to repoſe, and a lively expectation of the immortal hope he had pourtray'd.

All was deep ſilence—as if death had already done his work, and with Grandby had deprived us of every power to bewail him. Soon his breathing quickened, and we perceived he ſlumbered—Good God! how did he grow more to our hearts, as we feared to loſe him! Inſtinctively Mr. Williams, Sophia, and myſelf, as we ſtood around the bed, raiſed our claſped hands to heaven, as reſting on this moment, our laſt hope, and imploring its mercy now—Oh, Elmour! methought I beheld Mira drawing it down from above. We retreated to the end of the room—and with anxious expectation awaited the awful hour.

He ſlept long and tranquil—nor once did the dear Mira by a ſingle motion interrupt his ſlumbers. I feared ſhe would ſuffer by ſo long a continuance of the ſame poſition, and Sophia once aroſe to hint her apprehenſions—But as a fond trembling mother watching over her ſleeping infant, Mira, with the intreating looks of ſolicitude and care, motioned us back to ſilence.

He awoke refreſhed—but wandering a little, on firſt opening his eyes, aſked Mira were ſhe not the angel who conducted him to Heaven?—He after became more collected; and the phyſicians, in conſequece of the alteration this ſleep produced, immediately changed their courſe, and procceded, to meaſures, they

they dared not venture before: and if the criſis—this awful criſis—now—on this very now impending—My hand ſhakes as I write, Elmour—I ſtarted at every ſtir—Sophia and Mira in equal agitation are in the next apartment, awaiting the ſucceſs of their cries to Heaven——Ha! that noiſe—that groan—— Oh God! 'tis Grandby's laſt agonizing——

* * * *

He yet lives, my Lord!—But how!—even the prayers of Mira yet to detain him from the ſkies, now ceaſe; nor wiſh a prolongation to the ſufferings of our dear, departing Grandby. The medicines were too potent, or he too far exhauſted to ſupport their power: tho' his fever is ſomewhat decreaſed, his ſenſes are more diſordered; and at times his frenzy rages with more violence than ever ſince his firſt derangement. His ſtruggles are dreadful; and (Oh ſhocking to behold!) occaſioned the blood to guſh in torrents from his mouth and noſe —I could not bear the ſight—yet cannot keep long away. Oh, Mira! Mira!

* * * *

Elmour! may we believe them! This alarming turn was not altogether unexpected by the doctors—'Twas the effect of his late diſorder—and may not be an unhappy one, if his ſtrength—but ah! weakened as he has been—yet his natural conſtitution: his youth —they do not quite deſpair—nay, if he ſinks not under the operations of this night, they will

will even bid us hope. Oh that 'twere paſſed ——What a wiſh! when morn may bring with it more dreadful certainty! Poor Mr. Williams—Sophia—but what are they to Mira! yet wonderful! ſhe can bid them confide in heaven!—

* * * *

Bleſſed! bleſſed morning! that promiſes a Grandby to the world—a Mira to life and me! Oh, Elmour! like a coward my ſoul ſought you in affliction, but now I know not what I would ſay—as a churl I hug my treaſure, and cannot—cannot impart it.

Ah, my dear Lord—yet, yet I may be too ſanguine; for how can I be otherwiſe, when my Mira's Grandby—But there are hopes—indeed there are: the numerous bliſters, violent perſpirations, that might have overcome health in its full vigor, the weak, the languid Grandby has ſupported: and more—Nature, in the ſtruggle, has probably (thus aſſiſted) thrown out the latent diſorder in his frame, equally to be dreaded with death itſelf. If he continues thus throughout the day and night, there will ſcarce remain a doubt of his recovery; and Mira will, in that caſe, ſet out to-morrow for Eglington-hall, where they probably begin to be anxious. We have not written—it had been cruel to do ſo (tho' within our power); why torture them with the ſuſpenſe we were then ſuffering? and now Mira will herſelf convey the glad, the welcome tidings.

As Grandby is to be left to abſolute reſt and ſilence, we have perſuaded Mr. Williams to attend Miſs Eglington home: while I, who can better command my ſolicitude and feelings, remain with his nephew. The affecting buſineſs of thoſe paſt few days, has been ſevere on him—a change of ſcene, tho' for ſo ſhort a period, will, we hope, be of ſervice. Sophia hourly gains on his heart; and the child is never from his arms, unleſs while he is attending on Grandby.

Mira's joy is as ſilent as her grief before; and like that, more eloquent than even her own language could be.

Your Lordſhip and my Lady Elmour will anxiouſly await this letter—yet I will detain it for to-morrow's more certain information.

* * * *

Miſs Eglington has juſt ſet off.—Grandby, tho' hardly able to ſpeak from weakneſs, laſt night enquired for her: I then congratulated him on the bleſſed change in our proſpects, and beſeeching him to be guided by the directions preſcribed, informed him of Mira's intended departure. He thanked Heaven with grateful fervour, and promiſed ſubmiſſion to his beſt of friends—but aſked one ſight of Mira ere ſhe left him; and in the morning ſhe juſt whiſpered her joy, and a command to obey Lord Sedley in all things;—imprinted the injunction on his lips; and Grandby, with a ſatisfied ſigh, reſigned himſelf to repoſe.

She

She is gone—and will yet be happy—Mira will yet be happy! Elmour, rejoice with your —*Sedley*.

Tho' I have not the honour of Sir George Lovemore's acquaintance, I cannot forbear informing him of an event, in which, I know, he feels a double intereſt. My opinion of him, is now unqualified—Mira, and he alone knew, and were worthy Grandby.

LETTER LXXXIII.

Lady Eglington to Mrs. Boothby.

DO I indeed wake! or am I prolonging the ſweet deluſion, by (even in dreams) imparting to you my joys? You will believe my griefs have flown from my heart to my head, and overſet my reaſon: if they have not quite accompliſhed the work, pray for me, my friend, that ſuch a reverſe may not now effect it.

Yet Grandby's ſituation, tho' ſo much amended—merciful God! but for ſome check to thy overflowing bounties, we might with mortality forget the donor!

Think not I am ſitting quietly down to give even you (well as I love you) a cool account of thoſe wonderful changes—oh no: I can ſcarcely keep my pen in my fingers—I fly to my huſband; my children—we congratulate, lament, comfort each other by turns. Mira,

who is not, like me, bewildered by ſudden ſurprize, is giving you a haſty ſketch of what thoſe laſt eventful days have accompliſhed.

Sir Charles was right—O Mira! Grandby! what recompence my children—children of Heaven! Heaven only can reward you

Sir Charles and I were ſilently indulging our different opinions in our deſerted, ſolitary manſion, when a ſervant rouſed us from our deep reverie, by informing us, the carriage—the very carriage Miſs Eglington went away in, was driving up the Park—and Amelia, who had obſerved it from the oppoſite room, confirmed the tidings by a ſpring out of the door, and cry of—"My ſiſter! O my ſiſter!" as ſhe flew. "My child! my child!" faultered each parent—but the poor mother had not power to move. Sir Charles met her at the door——

"Welcome, my daughter! welcome once more to thy father's heart, thou, its fondeſt treaſure! however you went—wherever you have been, that heart, while burſting with anxiety, has ſtill confided in Mira!"—Yet he ſaw Mr. Williams following her ſteps, and ſaw in both the traces of recent ſorrow.—She fell at his feet.

"Oh my father! did you then acquit my precipitate flight?—alone—without your leave—but (and ſhe haſtened to me, and kneeled as I ſat—) I had not time—Ah! madam, forgive me. He lives—Heaven gave effect to your Mira's prayer—her preſence"—

"Oh

" Oh Mira! and were you then indeed with Grandby!"—I looked at Sir Charles—in accents of rapture he exclaimed—

" Then Grandby's innocent! O God! have I lived to behold this day! enough—enough!" —he fell on her neck, and could no more—with equal tranſport, but evident ſurpriſe, ſhe replied—

" Yes: Grandby is innocent! but, Sir—did not Lord Sedley's letter inform you? Ah, my mother! did you then believe—O! bleſſings on that altered look!—you will not yet condemn your Mira."—I claſped her to my reviving heart—and oh, Mrs. Boothby! what an explanation followed!—Mr. Williams—Mira—they ſeemed an age in ſatisfying my keen impatience. A kind of lethargy crept thro' my veins while I liſtened—and often as I rubbed my hands to try were I awake, I feared it was all a flying dream. Do you not pity Mr. Williams? and Sophia more—Poor young Grandby! who could have thought of him? a boy—a mere child, when he left England—then why ſhould his brother have concealed from us an event ſo intereſting? ſome delicate ſcruple either for Sophia, or relating to his right, as Mr. Williams's heir—The dear Grandby ever had too refined a turn—alas! what of diſtreſs has it coſt him! ſhould we yet loſe him—I will not think of it—ſure we have felt enough in the paſt: why then anticipate more evil, when hope, with expanding wing, again hovers over our dwelling.

Amelia is like a bird in ſpring, juſt eſcaped the limed twig—While her ſiſter explained, with dancing eyes ſhe cried—" Ah, Sir, did not Sir George Lovemore ſay'—ſhe caught herſelf, and ſtopped—but her father ſnatched her to his heart, and concealed her riſing bluſh.

She vows veageance againſt the " vile boy," to whoſe careleſſneſs firſt, and falſehoods after, we owed ſo great a part of our ſufferings. He, doubtleſs, loſt the letter Lord Sedley gave him; and, fearing puniſhment from the confuſion and diſtreſs he ſaw its miſcarriage occaſioned, invented part of the ſtory he told us. Tho', from its want, we had ſtill remained in ignorance, a knowledge of their having written had been, at ſuch a time, ſome conſolation. We have not yet had time to enquire, nor is it ſcarcely now worth our while.

But Lord Sedley—your favourite Lord Sedley! there, madam's, a young nobleman, who ſingly may redeem the age's character! That I had another Mira to give him!

He will remain with Mr. Grandby till he ſhall be fit to be removed to the Grove, and will then accompany him down. Mr. Williams returns in a day or two, tho' my lord's expected letters ſhould continue our hopes. He pines too for Sophia—either way, 'tis ſure the hand of heaven drawing in him a parent on his orphan. He means to remove her to his own houſe as ſoon as his nephew leaves Oxford, and amply to reward the thrice-worthy

thy woman ſhe was with; who, Mira informs me, made her many apologies for but believing Mr. Grandby was a " villain, and could poſſibly be engaged to any other lady than her own ſweet ſelf."

I intended but a line—yet how could I ſtop, when writing to you? Let me inſtantly hear from you.—Now, do not too violently condemn yourſelf, if only for my ſake, who ought yet *better* to have known Grandby.

LETTER LXXXIV.

Mrs. Boothby to Lady Eglington.

AH, Madam! what do I hear! can it be poſſible we ſhall yet be happy! that Grandby (what a " violent" wretch indeed have I been!) that Grandby—('tis a ſweet repetition) is innocent! that the virtues of a Mira will not yet be nipp'd in their perfect bloom? and that you, moſt worthy examples of parents, will now in your childrens' happineſs, reap the full harveſt of your cares and wiſhes!

Young Grandby! ſtrange that every thing ſhould have gone thus—ſhould have thus oddly combined—Oh, that horrid anonymous writer! that miſchief-making *Coſmopolite!* 'tis all his doings: that I had him by the ears—*him?* now I'll lay any wager 'twas a *ſhe*—There muſt be a *ſhe* in this buſineſs, and Lady Priſcilla muſt be the wretch. Was ſhe not at-

tached to Grandby? Did ſhe not hate Miſs Eglington, becauſe he loved her? Was ſhe not therefore jealous? envious? diſappointed? enraged? And what would not jealouſy, envy, diſappointment, and rage, in ſuch an infernal boſom, attempt? aye, and effect alſo, as ſhe too ſucceſsfully did, to our coſt.

I muſt be *violent*, my lady—I am vexed at heart we have been made ſuch tools—but I will be candid too, and confeſs, that, blinded by our paſſions, away we whirl before the *violent* gales they raiſe, and haſtily ſnatching at every preſenting appearance, drive headlong with the tide, nor allow ourſelves time to ſound the ſhoals lurking beneath.

Yet *appearances* were moſt wonderfully ſtrong to the very laſt—and you, impell'd by ſuch feelings—by ſuch an intereſt at ſtake, were undoubtedly right: tho' had Lord Sedley (faith, my lady, I ſhall fall in love with the ſweet fellow myſelf, ſince Mira muſtn't) but had Lord Sedley been allowed his own way, one ſingle word had ſaved us all this ruin, and have blown the *Coſmopolite* to the pit ſhe deſerved.

As to Mr. Grandby's proceedings, I'll venture a ſecond bet they originated from generous fears of diſtreſſing his Mira, and her friends, by an event not then aſcertained; and from the motive of his delirious viſit to Sir Charles, I make no doubt but he (at the time) waited a confirmation of his brother's fate,

fate, to effect, with the diſcovery of Sophia's ſtory, an accommodation with his uncle, thro' your combining intereſts—perhaps, when Miſs Eglington's hand ſhould confer on him a title to expect them. And then, ſo delicate the unhappy girl's ſituation—I wonder not he ſhould wiſh to preſerve her from view, till her lover's return (while expected) might with ſafety withdraw the veil that but ſeemed to conceal diſhonour.

I perfectly recollect the oppreſſion under which he ſeemed labouring, when he took his leave on that fatal viſit to Oxford:—Ah! had he then revealed—He would not give a diſtreſs that could anſwer no other purpoſe, but that of adding to his own. Darling fellow! he is dearer to my heart than ever—and ſo he ought indeed, after my ill-natured heightenings, and wiſe animadverſions.

Talk not now to me of what may yet happen, my lady—I could not now ſupport a diſappointment—He ſhall—he muſt be well.

I am all impatience for the whole of Sophia's ſtory—it muſt be affecting, if it obliges me to forgive her all the miſchief ſhe has cauſed.

Mr. Boothby joins in heartfelt congratulations: he ſays he would have given an eye to have ſeen his ſaucy Pet's *bluſh*.

Does Sir George yet know all? How will he exult—rejoice—Well may he now love Grandby: does not this new account, wipe out a thouſand old ſcores? He will doubtleſs

leave Exeter, the moment his affairs grant the poſſibility.

Poor Mr. Blomer will not, I fear, ever recover his ſhock—Lady Elmour (who daily recovers) wrote me ſome time ago ſhe hears the deviliſh woman is yet flaunting it away in Paris, with the minion ſhe went off with. I hope he may leave her to ſtarve there at laſt.

Heaven grant, for many reaſons, I may ſoon ſee Lord Sedley: from him I ſhall get an account of Mira's behaviour on her affecting interview with Grandby. What trials the ſweet creature has endured! They are paſt—the ſtorm is done and fled, and the harbour of peace ſerenely opens before her.—May ſhe now enjoy it, and her reſt be long!

LETTER LXXXV.

Lady Helena Barville to Miſs Eglington.

London.

YES, Mira—my all-accompliſh'd—my virtuous friend—*your* merit muſt be in the eye of heaven, and to reward it the peculiar care of an all-ruling Providence, diſtributing its bleſſings on thoſe who know to eſtimate the gifts, and puniſhment on wretches that ſpurn them like me.—And does Helena, the firſt moment ſhe takes the pen to welcome back

to

to happineſs her beſt-loved friend, but continue to pour out her repinings and never ending cares, inſtead of her intended gratulations on the bleſſed tidings that have imparted joy even to her? Ah! dead, quite dead to friendſhip too, when my boſom ceaſes to glow at Mira's good—at Mira's returning fortune!

Yet, till now, I was conſiderate.—While borne down by afflictions of your own, I would not add—but now—happy, happy Mira! how Grandby loves you! How has *his* love been proved! driven to madneſs! death—yes, you may *reſt ſatisfy'd*—you may *confide*—Grandby has *proved he loves you!* My heart ſickens.—I meant to have written—meant to have told you, how my ſoul gladdens at the events that have once more opened to my Mira her former brilliant proſpects—but I cannot—cannot write—Adieu: Heaven, by Grandby's entire reſtoration, grant you a perfect happineſs in the enjoyment of all it has to give on earth—the *whole*, the *undivided* heart of the man you love.—Adieu.

LETTER LXXXVI.

Miſs Eglington to Lady Helena Barville.

NO, Helena—Heaven, in its wiſdom, allows not *perfect happineſs* on earth; nor could ever Mira's heart, though poſſeſſed of Grandby's

Grandby's *whole* and *undivided* love, even while expanding (ſhould the Almighty give me to behold it) in his *entire reſtoration*, contracted within the little circle of its own enjoyments, *reſt ſatisfy'd*, while her Helena's felt a burthen.

What may this mean! You have alarmed me—yet I own I had been more ſo, were I leſs acquainted with thoſe perverſe little habits that ſo conſtantly tend to perplex Helena and her friends.

Yet let me know the matter now—tho' I eaſily gueſs—not one word of Sir William? not once mention his name through all thoſe pretty murmurs? Ah, my lady! What new little fit of jealouſy—or rather of ſpleen, has now tinged that lively *boſom* with unuſual *glooms?* I hoped (however there admitted by the playful *miſtreſs*) ſuch childiſh whims had ever been baniſhed that of the reflecting *wife*. Unthinking girl! And is it by their deprivation you define all the bleſſings *Heaven has to give!* And are *madneſs—death*, to be the *proofs* of Barville's love ere you can *confide!* the only proofs that can *ſatisfy* the *wife!* and does ſhe wiſh to *reſt* ſo, at an expence like this! Helena—that you could have ſeen my boſom thoſe bitter hours paſt—you would then know to prefer the eaſy, unearned bleſſings, and claſp them to your heart, without undervaluing them becauſe not dyed in its deareſt blood!

And

And you conclude mine now at eaſe, and already enjoying the contraſt preſented? It is lightened indeed! Oh how lightened from its late ſevere oppreſſion! But 'tis ſore—very ſore—and its wounds, however healed, will, I fear, for ever leave a ſcar.

After the *ſignal paſt*, I were a wretch to doubt the continued goodneſs of Providence—it will reſtore my Grandby to health, as to me—yet will not a mind like his, ever too ſenſibly feel for its repoſe the ſhock it has ſuſtained? I juſt declared I would not, and am I not doubting now? Repining?—"My God! in the apprehended overthrow of all my earthly views, I reſigned to Thee—in the hour of anguiſh and deſpair you gave me to hope, and I could hope—I yet confide in thy further mercies, and will yet ſee them all fulfilled."

LETTER LXXXVII.

Lady Helena Barville to Miſs Eglington.

DURING the late interruption to our correſpondence, my benighted mind ſeem'd unconſcious of the ſhades by which it was envelop'd—But Mira, like the ſun, again ſhines out on me, and reveals the ſpots that cannot longer be concealed. And oh that I might recall the time when they could be—when they were

were chaced away!—'Tis now too late—and in vain would I either lament or repair the errors that have murdered my peace for ever—that have loſt me Barville's heart!

It is not now a *childiſh whim*, or mere apprehenſion, Mira; alas! 'tis *dreadful certainty*—Helena feels it is—Barville does not endeavour to conceal it—and *the world knows he does not*.

Yet while averring but the ſimple truth, do not believe me exculpating myſelf—I have been wrong—fatal experience has proved my conduct reprehenſible to a degree: yet Mira *did* point out in time the quickſands I was entering—my own reaſon too was not *wanting* to convince me—but every light was loſt on blind infatuation:—I perſiſted, and am undone.

Sir William bore patiently for awhile my perpetual, (I tried, but for my ſoul I could not help them) my conſtant teazing doubts. I knew he loved me—loved only me—and I trembled at the chances that might, in the flighteſt degree, contribute to any alteration. He ſaw my ſituation if he but attended to the common civilities (I reflected not) a man of breeding can never be deficient in—he was indulgent, yet could not but be polite—his behaviour became conſtrained—awkward—he felt it; grew uneaſy in my preſence, and by degrees avoided it.

Yet, if Helena's preſence in company was irkſome, her ſociety at home was ſtill delightful

—and

—and ſtill preferred to every party:—parties without her, languid—but with her inſupportable.

You will allow this was a reaſonable alarm: to diſcretion it had been a happy one; but 'twas a ſtumbling block to me—and ſo, I fell. Barville, tho' altered, was ſtill materially different from all the huſbands whoſe example I ſo dreaded—tho', by flying his wife in public, he had taken one ſtep in the faſhionable lead, he yet preferred a home—'twas now Helena's province to render that diſguſtful too. She ſucceeded, and drove him for ever from her!

To repeat particulars, would be ſuperfluous: ſuffice it to ſay, I was now fairly jealous—I lowered, complained, fretted, raved, and—yes, Mira, I was quite the wife—I deſcended further—and—ſometimes fairly—*ſcolded*. To my pouts, rants, and heroics, Barville at firſt oppoſed ſoothings, remonſtrances, and—attention: but at length he tired—affected to *retreat* from the unequal combat, and—left me to reflection.

Some fine ladies, Mira, when Sir William with his *reſpectful bow*, had *eſcaped* at one door, would have been emulous of ſuch an example, and—coolly gone out at the other: but with all her faults, Helena is not revengeful, and is one of the *beſt of wives*.

But to be ſerious—and good Heaven! can I be otherwiſe a moment! Tho' my eyes were

were now fully opened, and I ſaw the deep plunge I had taken, I was too proud to endeavour at extricating myſelf, had I yet been in time—In part, I aimed at retaliation; was conſtantly abroad, tho' every irkſome eye ſeemed exploring my aching boſom, and when I met my rambler, idly attempted a compoſure and indifference equally foreign to my temper and heart. Had I ſtaid at home, I might, amid all my diſquiets, conjectures, and alarms, have eſcaped the worſt—ignorance alone could befriend me; but I was ſtill to *ſeek* my own deſtruction.

The trifling Townleys had juſt arrived from Bath, and left not one folly behind them.—I attended the ladies' firſt rout—the rooms were crouded—Sir William entered, and for a moment I believed I had miſtaken a maſquerade night for a rout—ſo different from his former ſelf did Sir William now appear. I had not ſeen him all day—that I had not ſeen him now!—his tranquil aſſurance was inſufferable; and plainly evinced a heart too well at eaſe. At firſt he was general, bowed, ſmiled, chatted to every one—and, Mira—he bowed and ſmiled *at* me—and then he politely addreſſed me in turn—" Dear Lady Helena, I have to apologize to you—I was juſt bidding you good morning, and wiſhing your commands ere I left you for the day, when a ſudden call prevented me the honour; but that *complexion* now aſſures me you reſted well." *Complexion,* Mira! well might it be

raiſed.

raiſed.—He ſpoke aloud—Mrs. Boothby, and *that Townley*, particularly heard him, and did ſo ſtare—I could not ſpeak, or dared not: that I had had him at home! Yet this was nothing—nothing to what followed.

His addreſs to Mrs. Townley, on entering, was not particular, conſidering her ſituation—He paſſed her on, and, as I ſaid, forgot not me in his rounds:—but his general compliments paid, he (I obſerved him well) his eye ſeemed careleſsly glancing over the company till—good Heaven, Mira!—how conſpicuous the diſtinction then! he was ſtruck by her appearance—To own the truth, tho' a cruel one, never was a creature ſo aſtoniſhingly improved! The little Welſh dowdy—would ſhe were again buried in her mountains! The man ſeemed really faſcinated, complimented her on the wonderful efficacy of the Bath air, that had, if poſſible, improved even her charms—in ſhort, he ranted ſo, the fooliſh girl was quite beſide herſelf, and aſſumed ſuch airs on her imaginary conqueſt, and gave me ſuch exulting leers—I could ſcarce help laughing.

Townley was engaged at cards. I took the firſt opportunity of drawing his attention to a behaviour that ſo ſtruck every body with wonder. He acted over all his grimaces at the ſight, but I could not now enjoy them:—yet he once ſeemed ſo enraged, I really hoped he would have beaten her. Finding themſelves obſerved, the wretches at length recollected

their

their ſituation—endeavoured to be leſs particular, and withdrew their eyes; but I ſaw the effort, and ſaw it was a vain one. I know not how I ſat it.—Your little Breeze juſt fluttering up to me at the time, fortunately contributed to conceal my emotion—and yet he vexed me.

" The ſupreme potency of your ladyſhip's charms can alone eclipſe the radiancy of this new celeſtial ſtar, whoſe attraction ſeems to portend ſo particular an influence." I was nettled, and fooliſhly anſwered aloud——

" Indeed, Mr. Breeze, your fine compliment's loſt on me—there are *ſituations*, in which charms, however *potent*, may ſhine at too great an expence: I do not wiſh to *eclipſe:* a married woman aim at conqueſts!—Good Heaven!" This was emphatically ſpoken, and drew attention: my eye turned upward, and mechanically fell on Mrs. Townley—I had betray'd myſelf—Barville ſeemed uneaſy—nay, a daſh of tenderneſs glanced over me, but I deſpiſed it.—Influenced by either guilt, or pity, (no matter which) he would have changed the ſubject.

Mrs. Boothby kept up the ball, and hit me ſome ſmart raps—I thank her: nor was ſhe leſs kind to Townley, whom ſhe now addreſſed.

" Good Sir! And can you tamely bear Lady Helena's ſtrange exclamation! Tho' I can allow for her country education, and peculiar turn, I ſuppoſed *Mr. Townley*'s breeding above all

all vulgar prejudice; for tho' you ſpoke not, I thought I obſerved ſomething of an imply'd aſſent in the *ſignificant geſture* with which you attended to her ladyſhip's uncommon obſervation, and which I now intreat you to combat (as it deſerves) with all your uſual powers." Knew you ever ſuch malice? I do not like your Mrs. Boothby, Mira. Townley's lip quivered as he ſtammered out—

" Lord Ma'am why as an *opinion* to be ſure—I—I think it ſomewhat odd—for—as you ſay—'tis rather an uncommon one; but—but—the practice—the *practice* you muſt allow is quite another thing, and there I coincided—Yes, yes, Madam, in whatever free *opinions* I would indulge a polite circle, I would never have a woman forget—that is—act over (and oh, what a look he gave his wife!) what ſhe is ſuppoſed only in compliance with cuſtom to throw out as mere faſhionable chit-chat.—I meant nothing more upon my word."

" I really am not ſo happy as quite to underſtand you, Sir, (cried Mr. Breeze) you would have your wife (for example) aim (to borrow Lady Helena's energetic ſtyle) at *conqueſt* in *appearance* only; but when ſupreme refulgent beauty, by emitting all its pointed arrows on the bleeding votive heart, ſo ſweetly invites its breathing anguiſh, how then the too potent *reality* can be converted to the mere *appearance* of an *imaginary* conqueſt, (hey, my lady!

lady! ſimpering at me) is, I muſt own, in defiance of all my mental eſſays at preception, quite an incomparable paradox."

"S'blood! (in a tone that made the little Adonis ſtart) would you talk of anguiſh, arrows, and bleeding hearts, to a woman already married! By Jove I'd make the puppy bleed in earneſt who"—

"Fy, Mr. Townley, (I interrupted) what do you mean? and what would you prevent? Mr. Breeze only alludes to that fine *Platonic paſſion*, which (to borrow in turn) gently gliding o'er the boſom, lulls every ſenſe to calm repoſe, and is of too *innocent* a nature to contend with duty."

"Bravo! my lady, (cried the villain) the very thing I declare, and (whencever your *ſtyle*) you have expreſſed the very ſentiment of my ſoul!"

Had you then ſeen his eyes, Mira, as they wandered over her face—and how her's anſwered all their ſubtle meaning! Pride, pride alone, I believe, prevented my tearing them out.

"Why (ſaid your favourite—your *Boothby*) I think your ladyſhip's perfectly right in thus relaxing from the favourite maxim of *too* tenacious wives; and in allowing *a little ſomething* as a relief to the intolerable ſameneſſes of wedded life. And now in addition to the thouſand ſtrings we have hitherto ſeen ſo powerfully drawing Sir William to the *calm repoſes* of domeſtic felicity, we have to add this

moſt

moſt potent ſpell, which muſt ever enchant a huſband, or at all reconcile him to the ſphere of a dread-ſounding home. An *appearance* at leaſt of freedom—*Platonic love:* the *thing* indeed—the *ſhadow* only, Mr. Townley—Lady Helena (with whom you *coincide*) leaves but the *name* of liberty, with which, as within a magic circle, ſhe confines to a free priſon her ſlave for ever."

The tickling ſhafts of your wit, Madam, (cry'd the ridiculous, truth-blundering Breeze) have moſt happily reconciled the ſeeming incongruity on which I had the honour at firſt to expatiate, and I rejoice at your, and Lady Helena's ſucceſs, in convincing Mr. Townley of the abſolute neceſſity of ever winking at *appearances* in *polite circles*, however diſtorting to the muſcles."

" Gad, (exclaim'd my Lord Blandon, who had hitherto liſtened in ſilence, and now roſe to join a card party) Gad, I don't underſtand what you're all at; you may mean ſomething, but damn me if I can find it out. When a man, or woman, or huſband, or wife, or what the devil you will, are in love, they ſhow it; and when they ſhow it, 'tis to be ſeen; for it *appears* with a vengeance, and is'nt a *ſhadow:* that's all I know of the matter, and ſo I leave you to ſettle it."

This curious dialogue was now (much to my relief) interrupted by card-table moves.—I could hardly ſtand—and deſired my carriage.

Sir

Sir William made me an elegant bow as I left the circle; and turning at the door, I ſaw him bending to the ſeducing ſyren, whom he ſeemed eagerly addreſſing.

How, Mira, did I ſupport this fatal evening? *Pride*, as I ſaid, muſt have upheld me—but when at home—retired—I am not complaining—yet there was a time—Ah! did I not aſk, "would it be always ſo?" I have done; nor am I ſeeking compaſſion—Mira has none for me—ſhe warn'd me: I ſought, and obtained my fortune.

I have ſeldom ſince ſeen Sir William.—One evening indeed he honour'd my party: but 'twas Mrs. Townley's attraction procured me the favour. And then—good Heaven! had I doubted before, what *conviction!*

I am ill—but conceal it.—I have taken my reſolution—No—I may be wretched, but not contemptible: I WILL LEAVE SIR WILLIAM.

LETTER LXXXVIII.

Miſs Eglington to Lady Helena Barville.

OH! my Helena—what have you done? What have you at *laſt* effected? Sir William eſtranged from you! Leave him! Your huſband! Good heaven! I am terrified—and know not what—yet I muſt write; muſt intreat you to reflect, while there may yet be time

time to recover the falſe ſtep, which elſe muſt lead to inevitable ruin.

How he once loved you;—how you loſt him—are not now the points in queſtion; unleſs the latter may afford a clue, by directing an oppoſite conduct, in your endeavours to regain him—for Helena, *endeavour* you muſt with all your powers: is he not your huſband? your beloved huſband? Talk not to me of pride!—Pride! Oh, how falſe a pride! —You took *pains* to be wretched; and will you not uſe ſome endeavours to be happy?—You ſought to ſuffer: and may you not better be chaſtiſed in healing ſuch a miſchief, than by its conſequence, if let alone?

But ah! how trifling even Helena's happineſs, to yet far ſuperior objects! Your crime (yes, *crime*, my Lady), ſtands not *ſingle*—and were it poſſible *you* ever ſhould poſſeſs a conſcience that could reconcile it to yourſelf? Where is it leading *others?* You drove Sir William from you—(and oh! how *unworthily* drove him) by violence.—Wreck'd in his deareſt hopes, his *home*, where (whatever befel *abroad*) he turned—expected—had a right to meet repoſe and happineſs: rendered at once his greateſt terror—his moſt unquiet reſt;—Unfortunate Barville!—What wonder he fled in his perſecutor, that preſence which (even had ſhe been *ſilent*,) conſtantly heightening the cruel ideas of every diſappointed hope—of every murder'd joy,

muſt

muſt ſtill have deeper driven the thorns to his heart! His Helena loſt—baniſh'd his houſe—where was he now to look for that conſolation, which in lighter calamities he had ſought for, and found in the boſom of a *wife*—in the repoſe of a *home?*—But there would he vainly turn; for thence originate his woes.

What a reverſe! Alone—abandon'd, and loſt to all the ſocial ties of life, (I am not here exculpating him, Helena—unhappy man!) he now madly attempts to plunge into any ill, ſo he may but fly *himſelf*, and any way baniſh that *void*, till now ſo ſweetly filled by Helena—And he yet may be miſtaken, and deplore his error—He cannot all at once forget the habits he preferred, and eaſily aſſume thoſe he ever till now deteſted.—Barville is yet a novice in the ways of vice—ſnatch him thence, Helena!—Haſte ere too late, to redeem him.—He was a moral—a domeſtic man; what he *now is*, *is your's*—and what he may be, yet within your power. Dear Helena, hear me—Oh! give—reſtore to the world, a character in which it prided, and of which you robb'd it!—To yourſelf, your friend, protector, huſband! (Oh! God, perhaps the father of your child!) And to its maker, *the ſoul you may endanger!*

And more, if more may be—Not only all the ill of Barville's perverted conduct in reſpect to *himſelf*, but what that conduct too, may influence, is now depending on Helena.—Mrs. Townley—ſhe, poor trifling woman!

woman! But *ſhe* met not in a huſband, one in whoſe ſenſe ſhe could confide; whoſe judgment might direct her.—Poor Mrs. Townly *may* be pitied; ſhe aſſiſted, but brought not her deſtruction *on herſelf.*

See, deareſt creature, with but a partial view, of what perhaps, may hang on this moment, the importance of your ſtation.—"Leave Sir William!" Forbid it, my Helena's better angel! Forbid it Heaven, and all thoſe virtues it inſpires, and which ſtill ſhine through the ſhades, that Helena *do* obſcure their luſtre.

But they were not given in vain—no, you will yet be more juſt to Heaven and yourſelf—You will ſeek, and be reconciled to the huſband whom you love, and have paid your vows to—You have broken them, Helena—quickly relent, and retrieve your error. You equally know that, and the way to amend it.

Perverſe littleneſſes, that would contract my Helena's heart into mean doubts, and to a wayward conduct ſo foreign to the natural nobleneſs of her diſpoſition, away!—and leave her (after what you've already made her ſuffer,) free from your future taints.—Then, inſtead of driving by deſtructive, as unwomanly behaviour, a fond and amiable huſband, to unaccuſtomed paths, ſhould any little blemiſh riſe ſhe diſapproved, by "converſe ſweet," by "winning ways" alone, will ſhe lead him to her wiſhes.

There are, though perhaps few the inſtances, who by thoſe happy methods, recover

huſbands even diſſolute; (and moſt are wiſe enough to endeavour to *keep* what they poſſeſs.) Thank Heaven, your's, is not ſo ſevere a trial—yet had ſuch been Helena's wayward fortune, as her's the powers, her's, I had believed the conduct that would have allured—have won a wanderer back to virtue and to her. Alas! how ſtrange! So far from aiming to *preſerve*, (at leaſt by means conducive to the end,) you are not ſatisfied to be happy—You will not let him love you—and, worſe than even a *paſſive negligence*, you exert every poſſible power of miſchievous effect (and Helena's talents render her equally miſtreſs of of every attempt) to weary, to diſguſt, and force him from you.

Friend of my ſoul! forgive my freedom—are not your's the concerns now at my heart? And can I be leſs warm?

"You have done complaining,"—"You ſeek not compaſſion,"—"Mira has none for you."—Sweet trifler! You know your abſolute ſway too well—you know how cloſe the net you ſpread o'er the heart—Yes, and Sir William, (if you are not *determined* to loſe him,) however he may meditate a flight, has not eſcaped. But abuſe not more your power—His having formed the idea, is big with danger—You have giddily danced on to the edge of the precipice, and one ſtep more devotes you.

As to me—my own concerns ſeem to ſubſide; or at leaſt, are ſuſpended by the more immediate

immediate importance of yours—Nor, while ſhe is thus ſituated, can I expect even Grandby will claim my Helena's attention; elſe, I would tell of his return, and hourly improving health—of the reception he met, not only at Eglington-hall, from the exulting parents and ſmiling ſiſter, but the country round—from all that knew, and of courſe loved, and had reaſon to rejoice in Grandby's happy return.—Yes, I would dwell on thoſe once more congenial ſubjects—and as the preſent ſeaſon, cheered by the ſun's reviving influence, ſeems animating in his rays, and paying to Nature a full tribute, ſo would my ſoul expand on *thoſe themes*, till it ſhould aſcend in grateful rapture to HIM who has called from mournful ſilence, my notes of gladneſs and of praiſe.

LETTER LXXXIX.

Edward Granby, Eſq; to Sophia.

Bengal.

I LIVE, my Sophia—I yet live to write to you—ſhall yet once more behold you; and with war, treachery, and all their horrors, our woes, diſtruſts, and ſadneſs, ſhall change to peace, to confidence, and joy.

Oh! what have I to relate! Sweet mourner—can you bear the ſtory? Nor too ſenſibly

feel the ſudden tranſition from torturing pains to matchleſs fortune? Well you ſuſtained your own afflictions?—Let mine meet equal fortitude; and oh! may both, (I will dare to ſay,) as we have borne ſevere adverſity, now prove we merit, and can ſupport equally well, the bright reverſe. Then hear, my beloved—and ſince at firſt, the tears will fall, let me haſtily fly from thoſe darker lines, to the fairer pages that ſhall chaſe them away; and with them, my Sophia's tears for ever.

After the firſt days given to the indulgence due to ſuch a ſeparation, I determined to alleviate it all in my power, by an unremitting attention to the ſtudy of my profeſſion—the art by which I deſigned to have arreſted Fortune, and have forced her to be kind; and here, often did I anticipate the time, when laying my laurels at my miſtaken uncle's feet, I ſhould aſk as my merited reward, his approbation of my acknowledged love; which then he could not longer refuſe me. Yes—and from a brother's ſuccouring hand receive the ſweet bloſſom he had preſerved from every threatening blaſt—And he ſtill has it in ſtore for me—he has protected the tender exotic ſo expoſed to a rude, unknown clime: and he will now place it in my boſom; there ever more to flouriſh.—Will it, Sophia, indeed, be ſo!—Oh yes—and the bleſt hour approaches—is at hand, my love: then let not another ſigh, whatever you read, ariſe; but prepare all your ſmiles to receive me.

But

But tell me, firſt, (for never has a line, among the many I know you have written, bleſt my hands,) ſay, was not the little ſurprize I deſigned you, by my brother's unexpected viſit, a welcome one? I knew it would ſweetly tend to diſſipate the many anxious fears I was ſo cruelly forced to leave you with—What a meeting! I think I behold your emotion, when firſt ſtruck by our great reſemblance, ere he could fold you to his heart, and call you its deareſt ſiſter—The wife of his poor baniſhed Edward—and while promiſing you all his tender love and protection, I ſee your glowing cheek—your ſwelling eye—as you wondering liſten to his ſweet aſſurances—timely as ſweet.—Dear, dear brother—friend—parent of my orphan years! What do I not owe you, for all you have done and felt for me? —And for Sophia, what can repay?—I muſt tear me from the ſubject, or when ſhall I proceed?

Of voyages, toils, and battles, preceding the memorable *twenty-eighth of April, eighty-three*, I ſhall ſay nothing.—My Sophia's tender boſom would ſhrink from the ſcenes. Oh, that I could altogether ſpare her! But to account for my long, long ſilence; of the reduction of *Bednore, by Tippoo Saib*, and its conſequent horrors, I muſt ſpeak.

We were forced to yield—and yielded like men; like *Britons*; but, alas! it was to *Barbarians* our fate had ſubdued us—to boſoms,

tho' martial, unknown to honour.—Yet huſh —for while retaliation ſtill ſounds in my ears, 'twere not leſs wiſe than unjuſt to recriminate.

No, Sophia—(but let me tell thee in whiſpers, my love). Not alone where the barbarous encampments darken the fertile plains of India: but where Britons follow the call of Bellona, her footſteps are marked by blood, which no cauſe *demands*, or *can* wear away—and conqueſt here breathes devaſtations around the flowery ſcenes, that leave not one laurel to wreath her crown! Yes—fled for ever *now*, the Mars, that in Creſſey's field could ſmooth the rigours of his brow, and while Mercy veiled its terrors, bid Victory chain "the dogs of war!"—Then let me *deplore* the change, but no more preſume to *recriminate*.

Baſe perfidy ſucceeded the capitulation; and immediate death to many, cloſed the proſpect of ever lengthening woes. Among the firſt, our unfortunate General ſuffered—and not one of his brave followers with powers to avenge the blow! Oh, the encreaſing pangs of our boſoms, as the hours of his expected return elapſed; and of that moment which brought the news of his treacherous detention! We heard, felt, and—were *forced* to be ſilent!

Sweet girl! let me veil from thine eyes, the treatment the ſick, the wounded, the dying, ſuffered.—

ſuffered.—I was in health, but wanted not to my ſhare—Sophia, while I reveal the part that twines with my ſtory—Still mark—it led me to bliſs, and rejoice.

Before we were impriſoned at Bednore—an impriſonment that for twelve long months more prevented my ability to lull by any poſſible intelligence the fears I knew my darling wife ſuſtained—Ere this we were ſearched—ſtripped.—So debaſing an idea had not occurred, and I was not prepared. They took my watch and money, and then my cloaths, piece by piece, to my ſhirt—To remonſtrate were idle; like other conquerors, they but uſed and abuſed their power, and I let them enjoy it. The *picture of Sophia* hung at my heart; I could not conceal it—they ſaw it—an Indian motioned to take it—I waved my head, with my ſpread hand covered my treaſure, and preſſed it cloſe to its manſion—Yet he would have ſnatched it—I felled him at my feet.

Inſtant vengeance followed the meaſure—They ruſhed on me—and firſt (as the deepeſt revenge) attempted the picture: For a while I puſhed off the ruffians; to ſave it was impoſſible; but any way, to prevent its immediate ſeizure by the wretches about me, was all within my power; and, ſcarcely knowing what I did, I tore it from the ribband the dear hand of Sophia had tied to my neck; ſnatched a laſt look at the unconſcious ſemblance ſmiling at my ruin; and giving it a

random toſs, away it whirled through the air, and *Heaven-directed*, fell among a party of Engliſh ſailors, captured about the ſame time with ourſelves, and about to ſhare the ſame fortune.

I now once more had patiently ſubmitted; but one—the villain—Oh God! He ſtruck me—ſtruck me, Sophia—and he yet lives—my blood boils anew at the recollection, or ſurely the circumſtance had not eſcaped me that unneceſſarily muſt give you pain—But ſince I began let me finiſh the anecdote—At the ſame time ſurrounded—handcuffed, and chained, I could only in ſpite of every reſiſtance, drag on my galling irons to the ſpot, where he who ſeemed to command the party, ſtood—I complained, threatened, execrated—He ſpoke a little broken Engliſh—enough to ſilence me—"White people do ſame to *poor Laſcar*, and *poor Laſcar* muſt ſay notin."—Then with a look, and ſpread hand on his boſom, that ſeemed to plead for belief to what, to an *Engliſhman*, might appear a doubtful aſſertion, he emphatically added—"*Me people too.*"—I bluſhed, hung my head, and with an increaſed ſtock of philoſophy, turned from *poor Laſcar* to my fortune.

While they were chaining me to my companion, the group of ſailors were led on to their deſtiny, linked alſo in pairs; and one of them thus addreſſed me as he paſſed—"Hard grappling, maſter—-thank you—-thank you, though.

though.—They tell me 'twas you; but how a'God's-name, you knew I loſt it's, the marvel.——God preſerve your honour, and ſend you better cheer."– Suppoſing the man either mad or drunk, I thought nothing of the matter, and ſoon after reached my priſon.

'Twas now I had leiſure for reflection. Oh Sophia! why do I recur—'tis over; and if *at the time* I continually bleſſed my Sophia's ignorance of my ſituation, would I now give her ſorrows I no longer feel myſelf? But ſweet (as Metaſtaſio ſweetly ſings) to recount our dangers paſt.

My ſad misfortune! My picture! Not a night---not a morning, but I lamented it, and preſſed my vacant hand where it ſo long *had been*. How many tears I paid to its loſs! Ah! had I known the myſterious events which that wonder-working little picture was then ſearching out; inſtead of puniſhing, how had I bleſſed the hand that forced it from my boſom! And though delightful amid all the hardſhips I experienced through each ſolitary day of my ſad confinement, had been the melancholy pleaſure of contemplating all that remained of Sophia; with rapture I had reſigned the partial good that led to ſuch ſtore of joys. I will haſten to them, my love; and forgetting that year of evil, bring you to its end; which, with the war, concluded our confinement and woes, together.

" Oh liberty! Man's deareſt---moſt congenial good! And are there wretches who dare

deprive their fellows of Heaven's beſt gift? Oh, my country! ſtill be *free*; but as you know to keep and to enjoy your birth-right, may you feel the equal luxury of imparting (not deſtroying) what Heaven meant a *univerſal* bleſſing!"---And, my Sophia, this ſhall ever be my prayer, often as I think of the *priſon of Bednore*, and of the joyful day, that with its doors, burſt on us its brighteſt rays, and LIBERTY!

In the general pacification, the ſailors I mentioned, (ſuch I mean as ſurvived their rigours,) obtained their freedom, and fortunately among them, the charming fellow (you will not long wonder at my ſtyle, Sophia,) who had addreſſed me on his way to priſon---His firſt object, on once more beholding the light of Heaven, was to ſearch me out---He followed me from place to place; and one day I was informed an Engliſh ſailor impatiently aſked to ſee me, declaring, "now he had come up with me, he'd have a bout before he ſheer'd off, he'd warrant; and he had chaſed me ſo long, he had a great deal of lee-way to bring up too afore he could finiſh the voyage." Not a word, my Sophia, will I ſuffer you to loſe of this dear ſailor's---treaſures---worlds flow'd from every ſentence. I ordered his admittance, and inſtantly recollected him.

"Well met at laſt, your honour---you look mainly; yet many's the hard ſtorm we've both weather'd ſince the day the enemy boarded

boarded our quarters with their curſed pot-hooks—I ſhan't belay that awhile, and for all the talk of peace, I hope to have tother bout, and pepper their d——n'd tawny jackets yet; for when they know in Old England the ſcurvy trick they've play'd us, maſter, belike the wind will change again and blow (as they like *iron* ſo well) all the metal o'Spithead about their ears. But we'll talk of that another time; I'm in haſte now, and come to ſettle another job that puzzles me. When I ſpoke to your honour, while they were towing me to anchor, (and a d——n'd foul birth it was) and thank'd you for throwing me Madam Sophia's picture which I thought I had loſt, and wonder'd what tide had drifted back again; I found after, I made a miſtake in my reck'ning; and then taking to'ther obſervation, I was quite out of my latitude; for whether I look'd larboard or ſtarboard, the lands o'both ſides bore ſo main like, I wonder'd where the devil I had ſteer'd to. So, more and more puzzled, I e'en caſt anchor in my thoughts till your honour might pilot me ſafe into port."

What muſt be my ſurprize at this ſtrange harangue? "Sophia's picture!"—I could readily conceive he had pick'd it up when I toſſed it away; but how he ſhould know the *original*, or what he drove at, was "a puzzle" indeed! But oh, increaſed! when, with the very picture I had loſt, he took out another

another ſo wonderfully like it, that immediately to decide which was my own, might even to me be perplexing!

"Here, maſter, every man his right an he can; but if in the haze, mayhap, you can't keep your ſtation, e'en take your chance, and do your beſt, that's all. Yet an I could, I'd like to ſtick to my own oar, for dear Madam Sophia's ſake."

"Sophia's ſake! Do you know Sophia! When—where did you ſee her? How came you by this picture? Speak, for God's ſake! —Perhaps you can give ſome intelligence."

"Fair and ſoftly, maſter—too much work for one hand; but as to the token, I came honeſtly by it; ſhe gave it me for her huſband, and if he won't have it, and I can't come up with the rightful heir, why I'll keep it as lawful prize money. Bad wind blows nobody good. I don't ſpeak of the gold, for I would'nt ſell it for a month's wages; but the pretty thing looks ſo main like poor Madam Sophia, when ſhe ſaid,—"Deliver it into my huſband's own hand,"—and ſhe called me *friend*, "*dear*, *worthy*, *only friend*"—I ſhall never forget them; and I think I ſee her ſweet face now—her dying eyes caſt up to me——So pitiful! I could cry a can of brine, whenever I remember her ſad—ſad hap!"

"Dying eyes! Sophia dead! Oh Heaven forbid! When—where was this—did ſhe die? —Perhaps ſhe yet lives.——

"Ah!

" Ah! maſter—dead as a ſalmon—I ſaw her buried."——

The ſituation to which I was now reduced, bars recollection—I raved of my wife—My loſt Sophia!——" Wherefore did I eſcape the dungeon of Bednore for more hateful days?"—The ſailor had frequently tried, and at length obliged me to hear him.

" Your wife, maſter!—Madam Sophia your wife! Burn me, I fear that ſame dungeon of Bednore has unrigg'd ſome of your honour's top-tackling—for an you were right in your upper works, you would not heel ſo much to leeward. He! He! He! Married indeed! Married eighteen years ago; Why your honour was ſcarcely breech'd.—No, no, young maſter, 'twas *Mr. Williams* the poor lady was *married* to; though he's gone mad too belike, and after all won't own her. As to the token, if you dive at that, though you've got one of your own, e'en keep it a-God's name, an you like; ſince old Beavour's under hatches, and belike I ſhall never more ſee the little ſpawn I ſaved from the ſharks.—Pretty bantling! 'twas almoſt going the long voyage with its mother; but Beavour rear'd it, and ſwore he would ſend it with all he was worth, to its father, as ſoon as he knew where to find him; and well he might after running him aſhore, with a rich cargo too."—Oh, my Sophia! does not the ſtream of life leave your heart, as it did mine, on this ſudden ruſh of intelligence,

gence, ſo new?—ſo ſtrange and unexpected! And do not your ideas expand with its returning flow, and a new world ſeem to open on your wondering ſight? All—all Captain Beavour's words and conduct, and my uncle's now explained! But be calm, my love; compoſe yourſelf, and attend the ſequel.

'Twas ſome moments ere I could recover a kind of ſtupefaction that ſeized me, and I could ſpeak—could implore him to ſtay (for he was preparing to be gone) and tell me all.—I informed him what relation I bore to Mr. Williams, and how nearly tied to that very cherub he had ſaved—ſaved for me!—And think you not, Sophia, I claſp'd him to my heart, almoſt burſting as it was with grateful tranſport? The noble fellow was affected, and ſwore—"He would not now laſh St. Anthony for a fair wind, ſince a foul one drove him from his courſe to take up a wreck, and change his old ſhipmate's ſalt water for a hearty can of grog." Nor ſhall Jack Bowling, my Sophia, ever thro' life want a ſafe harbour, while my boſom has a good to ſhare, and my arms can afford him a ſhelter. He gave me the deſired particulars.—Oh that I were by to ſupport my loved Sophia, while ſhe pays to a hapleſs mother's memory the pious tributary tears ſo due to virtue, and misfortune!

"I belong'd (ſaid my new friend) to the Orpheus on her laſt voyage—pretty foul—'twas her firſt too—and a tighter, handſomer bark never

never ſwam on ſalt water. Mr. Williams was ſecond mate, and Captain Beavour commander.—Every one was fond of young Williams, tho' he laſhed away a main rate at times; but that was in the way of his duty; and we liked him the better for keeping a taught hand.—As to the Captain—to be ſure he was not *naterly* a kind-hearted man, and all hands every day piped to that tune—but every one has his way—I minded my own buſineſs, and ſteered clear—for what was his ways to me? He wasn't in my meſs.

" It ſeems Madam Sophia Anſill (I think they called her) was the cauſe of much miſchief and warfare on board, on account of her being ſo proper and well-favoured a young woman—and ſo ſhe was, as you'd ever ſee in a ſummer's day: and ſhe was not a bit given to loftineſs therewith, like ſome of your fine madams, no more to compare with her than one of theſe here black ſea-boys (as they call them) to your honour: but ſhe always was the affableſt lady in the world, and ſo ſoft-hearted—Whenever I was ſteerſman while ſhe was on deck, ſhe would greet me ſo kindly—and once I ſaw her turn as white as the main-ſail, when a lad had like to have ſlipt his hold off one of the top-bowlings.

" Well—with all her goodneſs, ſhe ſhot our noble Commodore dead thro' the heart; and the ſhip's ſteward told me the purſer would have boarded her too, an he dared; but

but when he ſaw her chaſed by a firſt-rate, he ſheer'd off; but a tight frigate's eaſieſt work'd; and young Williams had not a faint heart; ſo ſcorning to lay to with a rich galley in ſight, after a ſmart attack, he won the day; and, to make ſure work, he directly mann'd her with the parſon's help, and then took her in tow himſelf.

" Tho' they ſtow'd all ſnug under the hatches, there was foul weather enough breeding every day, and the ſtorm ſoon gathered thick and threefold: I can't ſteer your honour thro' their bearings: there was high reckoning—but I didn't keep the log-book.

" Maſter Williams was mettleſome, and the Captain hot-headed—ſo they ſtruck, and at laſt fired the Company's ſhip, for ſhe'd never been loſt had Jack Williams kept his ſtation; for as for the two firſt in command, (they don't command me now) I ſay they were both nincompoops, and didn't underſtand their duty better than two freſh guinea-pigs.

" Beavour, finding how one of his officers didn't value him a rope's-end, and moreover was the cauſe of the young woman's hard-heartedneſs, played him a ſcurvy trick at the Cape, where he loitered away ſix weeks, then ſlipped his cable, took a French leave, and from that moment the ſhip's company began to mutter, and bear leſs command, for the ſecond mate was the only officer knew more than themſelves; and maſter, 'tis a d—n'd hard

hard morſel to ſwallow, to have a parcel of ſchoolboys and freſh-water jacks belaying away, and learning their grannums to ſuck eggs. When we're well *commanded*, we know how to *obey:* Old England has found fault with her Captains and Admirals afore now, but never with her tars: we love Old England, and Old England ſhould love us; and they never can ſhow it like giving us *good commanders*.

" We never had luck after we left the Cape —ſtorm gathered ſtorm—the winds blew hurricanes—the ſkies poured ſeas from above on the ſeas below, and the lightnings play'd along the decks and ſplit our ſails to tatters, while the conſtant thunders prevented our hearing our ears.

" Our maſts were at laſt cut away by the board, and the hull ſcudded before every gale that blew; we expected every day would be her laſt, and indeed our hardſhips almoſt made us wiſh her at the bottom; for 'twas now ſix months ſince we ſailed from the Cape, our water and freſh proviſions were out, and we had ſome time been put to ſhort allowance: the men, always fatigued and wet, died faſt, and thoſe that remained were eat up with the ſcurvy.

" Your honour may think what a time poor Madam paſſed—beſide her huſband's loſs to mourn, ſhe was with child; and what with affliction, fright, and haraſſing, ſhe was brought

brought to bed before her time of a daughter —that very daughter your honour is now laſh'd to—and I thank God I could ſave her for you.

" Every ſoul on board was now more mad with the Captain than before, about young Williams; and he ſeeing the poor ſweet lady ſo bad, (for no one thought ſhe would weather ſo many miſhaps) began to repent his hard doings, and ſo promiſed to give them over, and let her go to her huſband, if ever more they ſaw dry land—but 'twas too late to take a reef in his top-ſails now—the ſhip ſoon after ſtruck in the night, on what ſhore we knew not; all I can remember of the buſtle is, that juſt as I was leaving the poor Orpheus—ſhe deſerved another fortune, maſter!—juſt as I was going to ſave myſelf, I ſaw Captain Beavour with the ſick lady in his arms, who tried hard to get from him, crying out all the time—' She would not leave her child—ſhe would ſtay and die with her babe—ſhe had rather die than live without it.'—I didn't ſay a word, but ſhot below, and ſnatching it up, wrapt up as it was, I hugged it cloſe with one arm, and truſting to the other, over I went in the waves. They buffeted hard for my little cargo, and I buffeted them again; but after a hard, tho' ſhort battle, I was maſtered, and forced to give over; yet ſtill (I don't know how) I kept a good grapple—Hei!—Hei!—what's this? An you begin to pipe, I have done

done—but never fear, maſter—keep a good heart, and don't blubber now all's over.—Yet you've been gathering in ſalt water a long time: come, come, cheer up—the very next wave hove us up high and dry in a nice chink in the rocks, where we remained ſnug at ſafe anchor till day-light. I took off the wet clothes of the poor little ſpawn, and held down its head to pour off the water, rubbing it all over with my hand, if ſo be it was not quite dead. As ſoon as I could ſee, I looked hard and thought it moved. This made me love the little cock-boat—I held it to my boſom, and the warmth kept reviving it, till it quite opened its eyes, and began to cry.

" But ah! maſter, when I looked about—not a ſpar of the ſhip, or a ſoul belonging to her, to be ſeen—the good comely creature quite gone to her laſt nail—and ſo many brave fellows!—I looked as if dropt from the clouds, all alone, and was ſorry I had'nt gone with my meſſmates. Then, what could I do with the child?—Tho' I might pick up ſomething to keep life in till I got up the country, if ſo be there were any back ſettlements, what could become of the infant, unleſs ſome kind ſhe-wolf would give it ſuck? like a ſtory I heard one of the mates tell once, out o' ſome book.

" But God that ſaved it, and me, mayhap, for its ſake, provided better; for as I was climbing down the rock to take an obſervation,

tion, I ſaw, ſitting beſide a creek, two people a little way off, whom I hailed, ſuppoſing firſt they were natives; but running along, I ſoon found 'twas Captain Beavour himſelf, ſupporting Madam Sophia, whom he had ſaved, and was now trying to comfort for the loſs of her child: ſhe looked more dead than alive: the Captain ſpoke ſomething to me, but I anſwered never a word; for hearing the poor young woman take on ſo, I run faſter back to the rock again where I had left the child—I can't tell your honour what I felt as I carried it alive, and hove it in its mother's arms.—She look'd an ſhe did'nt believe me—then at her little one—then at me again—as if to know where I got it?—So I aſked her an ſhe thought I had found it in a bird's neſt? Alack! ſhe didn't heed me; for what with one thing, what with another, ſhe ſeemed parting her cable of life; but brought up again, and did ſo kiſs the bantling one moment, and then hug my knees as I ſtood by the next, and was ſo glad and heartſome; I wouldn't for a knock at the beſt Spaniſh galleon chock full of hard dollars, but a' brought her her child.

"As to Beavour, he was quite unrigged, and looked for all the world an he were going to be hung up at the yard arm—And d—mn me, maſter, but he deſerved a round dozen at leaſt, for loſing the brave ſhip Orpheus, and his Majeſty's good ſubjects beſides; and I had a month's mind to give him a piece of my mind, but he looked ſo pitiful I hadn't the heart.

"To

"To give him his due, he ſeemed quite penitent now, and cheered the poor lady all his might by a many good promiſes; and I too bid her take heart. So we hove her up between us, and towed her and her little cock-boat ſome miles along, till at laſt we met ſome of the tawneys about them latitudes—for we wasn't far from Batavia, as they informed Captain Beavour in a kind of jargon-like lingua franca, which he learned in his voyages.

"They brought us along to their *houſes*—belike they call 'em, and gave us milk and a comical kind of thing for bread, beſides a plenty of fruits of all kinds. So we ſoon fell to, and meſs'd main well; but the young woman grew more and more ſick every hour, till her laſt tide ebbed apace.

"The Captain (as we yet called him) took on ſadly, and I too couldn't keep my ſcuppers dry, when I ſaw her ſinking amain—all her gay colours ſtruck ſo ſudden—'twas pitiful!—and ſhe was ſo patient, and ſo ſeemly to the laſt—poor ſoul!—poor ſoul! ſhe thought of nothing but of Heaven and her child—except her huſband when Beavour wasn't by; mayhap ſhe was afraid then: for when he was out of eye's-ſhot, ſhe would make me ſtoop down, and in a faint, low ſpeech, beg me over and over, to the laſt moment, to find out her huſband, and tell him of her death, and how ſhe loved him to her grave—how

ſhe

ſhe had a child—and how I ſaved it from the waves.'

" The very day ſhe died, ſhe gave me the picture your honour knows of, and made me give my oath I would deliver it to Mr. Williams, as a token of the truth of all. She ſaid it was his: ſhe had given it for a favour when firſt ſhe bore him good will, and he prized the gift mainly; but he made her keep it ſafe for him, becauſe mayhap their enemies might ſee, and make it a handle for more miſchief:—ſo ſhe always carried it about her. Moreover, ſhe would not truſt it now to Captain Beavour, becauſe he might keep it himſelf—eſpecially if he ſhouldn't perform his promiſe about delivering up the child, which he mightn't do, or at all diſcover theſe tidings: ſeeing he might be afraid of puniſhment. And ſee, your honour, it was a lightening ſhe had before death of what was to come.

" Soon after this, finding herſelf going, ſhe took leave of the Captain and me.—Good ſoul! bleſſed me for what I had done, calling me her dear—beſt friend; and beſtowed forgiveneſs to the poor man, who on his knees accuſed himſelf all the while of being the cauſe of her death.—But oh, the powers! when ſhe came to the child—not a man in his Majeſty's navy could bear the ſight—ſhe pray'd for it—for its father; and begged Heaven (tho' it had afflicted *her*,) would lead her helpleſs daughter to her remaining parents' arms,

under

under whoſe protecting care ſhe might be ſhielded from all the ſnares and harms of life, and never know the want of a fond and tender mother.—She preſſed it to her boſom till her weak arms could hold no longer—and then ſhe looked at it—until her dying eyes were cloſed for ever.

" Your honour bid me be very exact, and I try'd to remember every thing. We buried the poor young woman under a large ſpreading tree, and hedged it all round :—Beavour hardly ever left the grave while we ſtay'd—he grew more and more ſad; and 'twas eaſy to ſee he now gave the child all the love he formerly bore the mother. We reared it on milk, and the pretty mumpet thrived mainly.

" Some of the people who promiſed to keep a good look-out, ſhortly after ſaw a large ſhip to the Weſtward—We haſtened to the ſea-ſide, and ſet up ſignals all along the ſhore :—by good luck they ſaw us, and kindly ſteer'd for the land. She proved a Dutchman, bound for Batavia—took us in, and once more, maſter, we knew our latitude, and could keep our own reckoning.

" From Batavia we ſailed for Madraſs—here we enquired about Mr. Williams, of a Boatſwain we met, who belonged to one of the ſhips we left at the Cape, and whom I had formerly ſailed with. He informed us, Mr. Williams had taken paſſage with them for Bengal, in ſearch of Capt. Beavour and his wife;

wife; but that finding when arrived, the ſhip had not been heard of, he ſuſpected the worſt; and, before almoſt dead of a broken heart, he had ſickened and died of a fever, juſt as they left Bengal.

"This account crowded more ſail on Beavour's rotten planks, and had like quite to ſink him. He declared he would keep the child till he returned to England, and then enquire out ſome of her relations, and give her up to them, with all he had in the world for a portion, as a recompenſe for his foul doings to her loſt parents. But he would not leave India a while, he ſaid—not till the affair of Williams and the ſhip blew off a little; and he begged me ſo hard to ſay nothing of his being ſaved, that ſeeing him ſo ſorrowful and down, I thought no harm to conſent—to own the truth above board, maſter, I looked on him as the only parent now of the poor babe I might as well ha let die in the wreck as go to pot now, if Beavour ſhould be hawled over the coals, and thereby, mayhap, loſe the property he intended for her, and which, he ſaid, he could draw together for that purpoſe unknown to any; for he had only one brother, he hadn't had to ſay to a long while, and did'nt care a rope's end for.

"Well—we parted at Madraſs—but I would'nt give the picture, which I kept (as it proved) again a rainy day—for as great a fool as I was, I ſaw as far as another.—

Thought

Thought I, mayhap, when he carries her to England, her relations may'nt believe the ſtory at hap-hazard—and if *he* ſhews the token, ſay he ſtole it. So I kept it always ſafe as my right eye in a nice new 'bacco-box, wrapt up in a clean linen rag. And maſter, that ſame little token I now deliver up to you for Mr. Williams, has been my conſtant companion theſe long eighteen years, and has ſeen many a foul and fair day—in America the devil and all to pay of good, bad, and indifferent—it was witneſs of the glorious twelfth of April, that proved as hot a day under our brave Hughes in the Eaſt, as my noble old Commander made it in the Weſt; and it has kept ſnug quarters in cloſe limbo ever ſince the day I firſt hailed your honour, as them black ſharks were ſnapping you by the legs, as they had done me before. But as good fortune ſent, they did'nt ſtrip me—belike thinking my old weather-beaten jacket could'nt bear more ſarvice. So while comrades and I were ſtanding together to be laſhed, ſomething comes down ſouſe, and hits my leg; I ſtoop'd and took it up, and ſaid I wondered how the devil it got out, and fell ſo hard—ſeeing it only ſlipped my pocket—when one of my ſhipmates told me 'twas hove a good cable's length, and he ſaw it whizzing through the air; and juſt then hearing a battle, we turn'd about and ſaw your honour buffetting away 'gainſt main odds,

and we wiſh'd to a man, the d—n'd ſtays about our timbers had let us bear a hand, or ſee fair play at leaſt; moreover, a lad from that quarter told us when we aſk'd, 'twas becauſe an officer named Grandby, flung away a picture they wanted to grapple. This made me think 'twas all witchcraft, how your honour, who I gueſs'd had found it, ſhould firſt know the right owner, and then ſkim it to me ſo nicely like a biſcuit. So I thought the leaſt I could do, was to give your honour a hearty cheer as I ſailed by. But after we were ſtow'd away in our deep moorings, and I went to lay up the token ſnug in its little locker again, I'd a ſhrewd ſuſpicion I was half ſeas over, and ſaw double, when I found another like as two oars, of which I told your honour before; and how putting them up together, I ſaid over your name often, deſigning when the ſtorm clear'd away, to compare our reckoning.

"The reſt you know—only I forgot to tell, how after many a voyage and hard weathering, I chanced once to go down a way in the country, to ſee old mother afore ſhe died, and to go ſhares of a little ſavings with poor ſiſter Kate, who is given to fits, and thereby can't earn much—So I found they were better off than I thought, by means as they ſaid, of *'Squire Williams*, who they told me, was the comfort of the land round for his kind doings, and charity.—I thought nothing of the

the matter then, only wouldn't wait of his honour to thank him for his kind ſarvices, till I was leaving the place; becauſe belike he might think as I wanted to go ſnacks, and that wouldn't be fair play, as I had enough and to ſpare, now folks at home didn't want for nothing.

" But ſee, maſter, when luck's in, how fair the wind bears for land; but 'twouldn't do neither, for this bout it blew beyond our bearing.

" The day I ſet off for Spithead, where the fleet was almoſt ready to ſail on this very expedition, as ſiſter was tying my hair at the window in order to go to the 'Squire, I ſaw riding in a ſhay, my old ſhipmate, Jack Williams, himſelf—who, tho' ſomething the worſe for eighteen years wear and tear, and a little tanned, I ſoon called to mind; and Kate crying out, there was the good 'Squire Williams, I was ready to jump over deck, and ge' him a chace and three cheers, to find he was'nt gone to Limbo, as ſaid; ſo I bid Kate haſten, and away I ſcudded full laden to his honour.

" But alack, maſter! when I ſent up my meſſage (by his chief mate belike,) that I came with a meſs of buſineſs from Madam Sophia, (for I thought that news would ſpeed him ſooneſt,) I found the wind was chopp'd about, and blew a hard gale full in my teeth—The ſpark was a little civil at firſt, and told me when he came back, his maſter begg'd to be

excuſed from ſeeing any one on ſo diſagreeable a ſubject as Madam Sophia.—So I ſtared—and ſaid, an he wouldn't believe me I had a token to ſhew—and came to deliver it—But the powder monkey fleer'd, and bid me begone, or I would *ha' another token* to carry more than I brought—So then to be ſure, maſter, I thought to ge' another row of lacings to his jacket, and ſee whoſe token bore moſt metal—But the noiſe brought about me a pack of fair-weather jacks; who, inſtead of ſtanding by to ſee there ſhouldn't be foul play, all fell aboard o' me at once; and becauſe I couldn't grapple with all, hove me out o' doors—And I was'nt obliged to ſteer off ſtraight for the ſhip, I'd ha' got a freſh hand or two, and ſtormed the caſtle anew, for all mother and Kate's jabbering about 'Squire Williams's good favours.—An a man throws away a handful o' money, when he's more than he knows what to do with, that's another thing quite from goodneſs—And Maſter Williams, an he could forget all Madam Sophia's pitiful haps, on account of her good will to him, I ſay, pleaſe your honour, he wasn't a good man, that's all. But as I mentioned already, the tide would'nt wait for me; ſo I ſet ſail for Spithead on the top of a land-veſſel, that made my head ſwim ſo, I could hardly keep a taught hold.

" As ſoon as ever I got to India, I began to enquire wherever I went, about Capt. Beavour,

Beavour, hoping ſome one mayhap might give me intelligence; for I would fain hear if the child was alive, and had been ſent over to her father: for as to Beavour's going as he ſaid himſelf, I was told in England how he never had the courage to face his enemies in that quarter.—But do what I could, I never learnt tidings about him, till t'other day I went o'board a man of war to hire for a hand—for, maſter, this laſt curſed job had haul'd down all my royals. It chanced as I was talking about wiſhing to ſee Captain Beavour, and your honour before we ſailed, a lad, who had been taken from one of the Indiamen in the hot preſs to man the King's ſhips, informed me he at that time belonged to Capt. Lane, whom he had ſailed with twice, and who was juſt come in from a country voyage. He added moreover, that Capt. Beavour was dead, and had ſent paſſenger in the Proteus her voyage before, a young lady who was now in England. So finding as things had ſteered this courſe, and that Beavour was in for a long voyage, I gave over the ſearch for him, and had better luck with your honour, whom I have brought to at laſt.—And for the reſt, you know it—and ſo God bleſs your honour, and ever give you ſucceſs."

And now, how does my Sophia? Does her heart yet ceaſe to beat ſo high at this wonderful event and diſcovery, an all-directing Providence alone could bring about? And my

poor uncle—my *father* doubly now—I have written to him—you will now ſee him—he will now no longer fly his other own Sophia—he will receive his child—and oh, his feelings then!—dear—dear parent!—What have been his diſappointments!—his ſufferings in early life! (My own ſeem loſt in his—and he never knew the ſweet reverſe I feel) Be it our's, my love, to ſoothe its decline.

But I have more to tell—I explained much to the ſatisfaction of my honeſt tar the myſtery of Mr. Williams's conduct on his well-intended viſit, which happening juſt at the time he left town to avoid you, I knew proceeded alone from his miſapprehenſion of your being the Sophia meant, and of her's being the buſineſs in queſtion. I rewarded him too, all I then could, and promiſed more when in England. He will now have no occaſion for more, he ſays; yet more he ſhall have.

My next buſineſs was to enquire out our old friend Capt. Lane.—You will conceive his aſtoniſhment at meeting me in India—I began to tell him the intereſting news—He knew all, my Sophia—knew all but our marriage before—for much ſurpriſed by Mr. Williams's behaviour, he had, on his arrival at Bengal from the circuitous voyage he had but juſt accompliſhed, taken a journey up the country for all poſſible explanation on the ſubject to the retirement where Capt. Beavour had indeed breathed his laſt, a few days after delivering him his lovely charge.

Here

Here he yet found his widow; who no ſooner underſtood his buſineſs, than ſhe ran out in high invective on his having been "acceſſary to her huſband's unjuſt dealings, in leaving all his property (the greateſt part of which ſhe ſaid was amaſſed by his trading with her money) from his children to a girl, who after all, had proved from his laſt confeſſion to be none of his own."—This, you may ſuppoſe, brought on an explanation; and Capt. Lane diſcovered he had thrown overboard, with the letters of neceſſary information, the duplicates of bonds to the amount of fifty thouſand pounds lodged in Bengal, and alſo a copy of his will depoſited with the Supreme Council, leſt the turbulent temper of his widow ſhould incline to diſpute it. The ever-kind Capt. Lane had already undertaken the recovery of thoſe bonds with that ſpirit of deligence that ever diſtinguiſhes his efforts for thoſe he eſteems, and had left me ſo little more to do than to receive them, that I ſhall be ready to ſail with him for England—to my Sophia's arms— before the end of this month.

In the will, poor Mr. Beavour declares in extenuation of his conduct, he had in the beginning ſtrictly deſigned to adhere to his promiſe of delivering up Sophia (ſo named after her unfortunate mother) but ſo long believing her father alſo dead, as at firſt reported by many, he had not (when he came long after to learn he had recovered the dangerous fever,

which had occaſioned the error) the reſolution to bring himſelf to part with the child while *yet he lived*—having by that time conceived for her an affection truly parternal, daily increaſing too as it was by her artleſs duty, and tender attention to the many pains ſhe ſaw him endure. He had it often in meditation to repair his fault, *but could not part with her* till the laſt: and then, as juſtice and affection required—and as the only reparation now in his power, he had left Sophia to her father, and to her all his poſſeſſions.

This acquiſition, however important, and agreeable to a young ſoldier, reduced by the end of the war to his ſcanty half-pay, loſt much of its effect by what *had gone before*.—My heart was before *full*—and it could hold no more.

By our united intereſts, a ſailor who wiſhed to remain longer in India was exchanged for my friend, Jack Bowling, who, by a vacancy in Capt. Lane's ſhip, which occaſioned a general move) was promoted to be one of the lower mates;—and if worth, merit, and ability, joined to friendſhip, exertion, and gratitude, can ever be ſucceſsful, he ſhall not long remain there, or in any other ſtation till he aſcends to one, that be it what it will, he ſtill muſt be an honour to. And yet, the dear fellow is all grateful acknowledgment, for what he calls "ſo great a favour—beyond his deſerts"—and he ſays, he will thank young Madam

dam Sophia for all when he ſees her:—" deſiring, mean time, his kind and hearty ſarvice."—God bleſs him!—will you not embrace him, my beloved? He was my preſerver—my more than preſerver—your's!

Capt. Lane was amazed at the information I gave him of the Beavours—he had been wickedly deceived—I eaſily now forgive them —*they are not my Sophia's relations.*

What a volume I have written!—'Tis too much at once for my Sophia—yet by my ſudden appearance, I would not ſurpriſe you, and what could I do when ſuch matter flowed on my pen, but write on? But throw it now from you:—I come, my Sophia:—Scarce will your aſtoniſhment begin to ſubſide, ere I ſhall awaken it anew by much I could not, would not have you know till I am by to kiſs away the tears which I occaſion.—Then will it be poſſible to conceal *any* part of the truth, my love? Then, (while leaning on that boſom) when for every danger and ſuffering paſt you liſten to, I feel a preſſure cloſer to your heart! Haſten ye tedious ſuns, and with the *dear*, the *native* clime o'er which you ſhed your milder beams, reſtore me all the tender tranſports of my Sophia's love!

LETTER XC.

Edmund Grandby, Eſq. to Sir Geroge Lovemore.

IN Paris, Sir George! And at this time! At this, when Eglington Hall ſeems the magnet attracting univerſal happineſs, wherefore delays my friend, tho' ſo powerfully touched! Surprizing!—We wait an explanation of your ſudden note to Sir Charles, with impatience: And I aſſure you, there are among us, whom a *little* will not ſatisfy—who will not be put off with a trifling motive—for ſo a ſudden bluſh, and exclamation of "To Paris, indeed! And what can the matter be *now!*" at the news, evinced.

My letters have, no doubt, been forwarded after you.—That lord Sedley—My heart ever beats high at his name, Lovemore—That he wrote you from Oxford, you muſt have received before your departure: hence our ſurprize at your leaving the kingdom, at the very period when ſo much invites you to ſtay.

I incloſe you my letters from India—What changes are here, my friend! I wake as from a long dream—Mira! My brother! My uncle! His daughter!—What will again become of me? I endeavour to be *calm*—to philoſophize *coolly* on the ſudden tranſitions of human events—to let REASON (if REASON can ever be kind to me) be ſtill the thermometer by which I in future meaſure FELICITY, and to mar

mark MODERATION its happieſt degree,—It will not be—It mounts—My blood riſes—Mira! My brother! Sophia! 'tis too much—I was not formed to ſupport ſuch extremes.

I ſay I endeavour—for well I know the danger—will it, Lovemore, be removed with the cauſe—*quite* removed? If I thought otherwiſe, not even the poſſeſſion Mira, ſhould ſway me to forget my ſituation—I am deemed too ſcrupulous on this perplexing ſubject; and informed if any thing will do me injury now, 'twill be my very apprehenſion. Perhaps ſo—and yet I ſometimes fear—time only can determine; and till then, I will try to *hope* alone. My health ſeems quite eſtabliſhed, tho' yet a little delicate—What wonder I ſhould ſo rapidly amend? Mira—her parents—ſiſter—my Sedley—all ſo tender, ſo ſolicitous—and not only this dear family—my own, and all about me, thus warmly united in one wiſh for me—I will—I will hope—Heaven for them, will heal me; and I admit no other thought, but gratitude and joy.

And you, my George—friend of my ſoul! —Did you think I had forgotten *you* while enumerating my other treaſures?—(And oh what a ſtore has this ocean of Adverſity diſplayed!) No—but you muſt ſtand ſingly—ſingly while even Mira is before me—Yet expect not I am going to *thank* you—when I tell you, Sir Charles, as a proof (he ſaid) of his opinion of my being perfectly well, and able to

ſupport

ſupport it, this day informed me of your *propoſal*; will you for this expect my *thanks?* I thank my God! Even for this there is yet reward.

"Sir—Sir, (I replied,) if indeed you wiſh me to preſerve what Heaven ſo late reſtored, take quickly from my heart ſome part of the load your *intelligence* has heaped on it."

"I will, (he replied) I will:—You are two darling fellows: I have two darling girls: One was your's before our unfortunate deluſion—I owe you ſomething ſince.—Take *both* my daughters; and when you honour one of them with your hand, beſtow the other on your friend; and I know not (and he wiped his eyes,) on which of them heaven will confer the greateſt bleſſing."

* * * *

I laid down my pen juſt here, Sir George—I was in danger of aſcending ſome degrees my *ſcale of moderation:* and this was *ſomething more* (I think) than thoſe points of elevation (I had *this* in reſerve,) which bore me off in the beginning of my letter.

My uncle—I was ſeeking, Lovemore, ſome ſubject that might leſs exerciſe my feelings—and I ruſh on the *fortunes* of my poor, poor uncle! Of his loſt wife—his new found daughter—Edward's ſtory—Oh when ſhall I fold my brother in my arms! That ſailor too—But Edward will leave us nothing but our tears to ſhew our gratitude.

The

The dear boy conſiderately incloſed his letters to Sophia and her father, in mine: For ſuch an event they were before ſomewhat prepared; but thro' the agency of the *yet living Edward*, was a hope beyond. I was at Eglington Hall, when I received a letter directed in my *brother's hand*—that I was any way equal to the trial, and to what followed, was another happy proof of my returning ſtrength.

My uncle and Sophia were on a viſit to me, while his houſe was preparing for her reception and future reſidence—but they were not by: He was not well—the ſhocks he had received (and they arouſed the former) were not yet recovered; and Sophia with all the tenper ſolicitude of a real daughter, refuſed to leave him.

Lady Eglington undertook the trying taſk; and only at firſt opened the diſcovery made by Capt. Lane's enquiries.—What tranſports!—tears!—congratulations ſucceeded!—When thoſe a little ſubſided, *my* part was to have followed by the accounts of the long impriſonment at Bednore, and among the ſurvivors—a diſtant ray of hope might gleam—I ſay *was* to have followed Lovemore—for no ſooner did Sophia at the firſt *hint* of a bare poſſibility, ſtart from her father's yet claſping embrace, and clinging round my arm, with wildneſs in her aſpect, cry, "*Oh tell me!*"—Then as wildly catching her to my bounding boſom, I replied, "He lives—He lives, Sophia!

phia!—And bids me prepare to yield in a few days, my lovely charge." Dear girl! But I had thrown her into a ſimilar ſituation, when ſhe had a far other proſpect to revive to; —Yet when ſhe did now revive, 'twas long, tho' ſhe aſked me a thouſand queſtions, ere ſhe could attend to any anſwer; or even to her letter—(read it herſelf ſhe could not,) or that her father could ſupport the trying narrative. He recollected the ſailor's viſit, and lamented the cruel miſtake his obdurate conduct occaſioned; declaring, " his puniſhment almoſt exceeded even his fault." And thus, Lovemore, Heaven allows our paſſions in their own effects, to be their own chaſtiſers.

Neither have yet recovered their compoſure. How can they, indeed, while the *expected* Edward fills every thought? Sophia beguiles the hours by reading her letter twenty times over—She then ſnatches up her child; tells him of his father—his *guiltleſs* father! —Then leaves the ſimiling boy, and throwing her arms about her parents neck, intreats him not to be unhappy; and while her own are flowing, wipes away his tears.

My deluded brother mentions to me (he would not to his wife becauſe of her *prejudices*,) the villian who deceived him to ſuch ruin, with grateful attention—He ſays he owes to him the *poſſeſſion of Sophia*. He muſt be undeceived as ſoon as he arrives, and proper meaſures immediately purſued to ſettle this unfortunate affair.

You

You will wonder, perhaps, in the ſeveral letters you have received ſince my recovery, I never once adverted to the agency which brought on me my ſevere afflictions. I am ever implored by thoſe whoſe judgment and intreaties I revere, and ever muſt attend to, not to *look back*—I will not far—and but for once.—My opinion is not decided, yet I have my *ſuſpicions*—they avail not now; and whoſoever the hand, I can forgive the blow.—Unleſs permitted by an Almighty Power, it had not fallen ſo heavy on (I truſt) my guiltleſs, tho' my devoted head.

Perhaps I was wrong to conceal from my friends, (particularly the Eglington family,) all intimations of Sophia's ſtory: They think I was; and my Mira gently chid me. You know my motives—the delicacy of Sophia's ſituation, and the uncertainty of my brother's; the unpropitious time, therefore, to eſſay once more my uncle's reſentment;—the apprehenſion of Sir Charles's cenſure until he ſhould know the whole of thoſe proceedings, and of my conduct;—thoſe were in part my reaſons, and chance perhaps aſſiſted.—What do I ſay! Chance! No—Does not the hand of Heaven appear throughout the whole! And now I only have, to confide in the Providence that allowed thoſe ſufferings, to lead to a cataſtrophe ſo happy.

And ſee, my friend—my Lovemore to partake in its full flow, the felicity he would at any

any rate have enjoyed in a degree from his friend's fortune!—Come—and while I alternately claſp you and a brother juſt reſtored from death, let me know no bounds to my ſwelling boſom's joy!—Come, and receive Amelia!—She will *thank* you for me; for ſweetly ſhe tells me, now ſhe is good, *ſhe loves me dearly too.* I fear you *overlook* that *too,* Sir George.—Adieu.

I informed you in my laſt, of my Lord Sedley's departure from the Grove.—We conſtantly correſpond—he bids me "to be eaſy on his account—he is not unhappy—that he contemplates the *felicity of his friends,* and cannot be unhappy." Oh Lovemore! why did our intereſts claſh?—Or why (I had almoſt ſaid,) was mine to be the better fortune? But here, too, I behold all wiſe direction—While my frail bark is ſhivered by the tempeſt's rage, HE (a ſuperior being,) conducts me yet trembling to the peaceful ſhore; and then TRIUMPHANTLY RIDES ON THE STORM!

LETTER XCI.

Mrs. Boothby to Miſs Eglington.

BE quite eaſy, my love—your friend will do very well: Lady Helena was only ſick of too much health—a plethora, my dear—and wanted a little wholeſome phyſic—ſo we have

have doſed her, that's all: and depend on me, ſhe'll be the better for't as long as ſhe lives.

Why you muſt know—tho' I greatly admired her pretty ladyſhip from the firſt moment I ſaw her, and ſoon loved her for the numberleſs excellencies ſhe truly poſſeſſes; I early obſerved too, with extreme concern, that really ugly humour—or habit, which at times almoſt rendered them all abortive, and promiſed in the end totally to overthrow both her own happineſs, and that of her amiable huſband.

We had become very intimate on her coming to town: Sir William knew the opinion with which I was honoured at Eglington-Hall—He ſaw the diſapprobation I neither could, or wiſhed to conceal at the abſurdity of his lady's conduct, aroſe purely from the ſincereſt regard and affection: his heart had long laboured, and he at length unboſomed himſelf to me.

Never was woman better beloved—Sir William Barville (different from many of his ſex) has ſenſe to diſcern the perfections of his wife, and virtue to do them the juſtice they deſerve.—But ſtill he is a man—and as he ſenſibly *feels* her behaviour, *reſents* it too—perhaps the more, knowing himſelf—I was ſometimes alarmed at his ſtarts—and clearly ſaw my lady (whatever her preſent ſway over his heart) was quick undermining the foundation on which was erected that power, her

own

own tenaciouſneſs only could render precarious —So, Mira, 'twas time to proceed to ſome remedy, believe me.

The Townleys were arrived from Bath—I recollected the laughable accounts you had read from Helena's letters, and Sir William, in the courſe of our deliberations, lamented too the conduct of his whimſical friend, as the only feature that tended to lower a character otherwiſe deſerving the higheſt eſteem; and his lady he added, really merited pity—She loved him, and divided between her affection and wiſh to oblige him, the foppiſhneſs of her behaviour had reduced her from a woman of ſenſe and talents, to the appearance of actual idiotiſm, or at beſt but rendered her a mark of conſtant ridicule.

I inſtantly conceived a plot—was introduced to Mrs. Townley, and except on the ſubject in queſtion, found her indeed abounding in ſenſe, diſcretion, and poſſeſſing great ſweetneſs of temper. I cultivated her acquaintance to the utmoſt of my power, and very ſoon having the fortune to gain her entire confidence, I proceeded to buſineſs, and firſt took the liberty as a friend who loved her, to touch on the oddity of her ſtyle of conduct in *public*, while the *private* left not a blemiſh behind. She bluſhed, wept, and throwing her arms about me, deplored the truth of my aſſertion as the circumſtance, which tho' the only one that ſhe experienced of the kind, had made her as truly

truly wretched at times as ſhe was at others ſupremely happy.

" I have intreated Mr. Townley (continued the ſweet creature) to alter his behaviour, and to let us be *always* happy, (for I ſee it makes him too very miſerable) and he promiſes he will, for that he ſincerely wiſhes it, but knows not how to begin till we leave town.—But then he ſays we will be wiſe in defiance of fools, without either fear or cenſure—ſo I am wiſhing for the country with my whole heart, and hope it may be long before we ſhall be obliged to leave that, together with the power to enjoy our wiſhes as pleaſes us beſt."

See here, my ſweet Mira, what a footing I had to proceed on—and I was now really as much intereſted for my new friends as the old —almoſt.

Having firſt engaged Sir William, I promiſed Mrs. Townley a more ſpeedy and certain relief from the irkſomeneſs of her preſent ſituation, would ſhe have but the courage to purſue my advice—She ſmiled and trembled by turns when ſhe heard it; innocently aſſured me—" on her word ſhe had ever, after flirting away in company, flown into her huſband's arms the moment ſhe could, and tears had evinced the opinion with which ſhe regarded the paſt coquetry: and this had always reſtored him to temper: how then could ſhe keep up his fears when alone, and the occaſion no longer

longer ſubſiſted?" I preached *perſeverance*, and ſwayed her at laſt.—Wasn't I very bold? —But every thing was ſo well pre-contrived, that the ſcene (among more) with which Lady Helena ſo alarmed my gentle Mira, was acted before the parties alone, or a few others, whoſe heads precluded obſervation or retention—perhaps both.

I had frequently trouble with thoſe pretended lovers.—No ſooner would they behold the *wry faces* and *ſwelling complexions* of their reſpective *dearees*, than they began to ſoften; and had I not been always preſent to nod, wink, check, and ſpirit them up, the day had been loſt, nor both in the way of now (as I hope) reaching faſt the meditated goal.

None but naturals, or thoſe rendered ſo by their paſſions, could have been a moment deceived—ſo I bid you once more be eaſy—leave all to me, and attend the iſſue—My lady is ſick—not much—the medicine works gently—Sir William always *roving* (to *Groſvenor* not *Cavendiſh* Square) knows nothing of the matter, or all would be ruined by tender folly. As for Townley, he, poor fellow! is ſo chopfallen, he has not exertion for one diſtortion more.

I did not intend truſting even you till the winding up of my farce; but your letter—your fears—your entreaties I would *ſave your Helena*, have induced me to alter my mind—ſo be prudent, and not a word of the plot till the denoüment.

Well

Well—now I have compoſed you, joy, new joy to my Mira—Young Grandby too recovered! And Sophia his own little cuz before the boy was married! Oh charming! Why all this would make another-gueſs play than mine—I like a tragedy where nobody dies—where all ends well— a *ſentimental* comedy as it were—and this ſhall be called the *Eaſt*-Indian. I'll have weddings enough, and foremoſt ſhall inſiſt on coupling my dear ſailor and Mrs. O'Shaughneſſy among the firſt worthies of the piece.—And ſo my lovely *heroine*, prepare all your graces, and haſten the day of univerſal joy.

LETTER XCII.

Sir George Lovemore to Edmund Grandby, Eſq.

YES, Grandby—I am indeed in Paris—but I might have ſpared myſelf the jaunt—might have claſped my friend—my reſtored friend, to my rejoicing boſom, and oh my thrice happy fortune! might, ere this, have ſeen the roſy lips of my divine Amelia opening to bleſs me with conſent!

Yet I will ſoon be with you—I thought to have ſurprized you—to have performed my engagement to Sir Charles—have brought to his feet the ſorcerer who wrought the infernal ſcene—And then, after beholding my friend

" ſtart

" ſtart up in his own ſhape" divine, to have claimed the ſweet promiſed reward in view—the only one that *could* have added to that I had received by the full acompliſhment of my deſign. But *Sedley* bore the ethereal ſpear, whoſe touch could not be reſiſted by aught of mortal.—Sedley foreſtalled me—and ſtill be his the meed of every virtue—be his the palm of this deed alone, while I am content to ſhare at its feet the ſhade it ſpreads of univerſal happineſs and peace.

I did not receive the letter, with which his lordſhip ſo kindly honoured me, till too late to ſtop my purſuit. My Grandby's too reached me in Paris—Oh the extatic feelings they all excited! My own ſhare of felicity had ſurely overpowered—but your's!—your brother's—Sophia's!—" Too, too much" indeed! But you need not be apprehenſive—you—*can* ſupport what, as I read, had nearly overwhelmed my *really* " frail bark" by exceſs of joy!

While detained at Exeter by the perplexing ſituation in which my uncle's will had involved me, my thoughts were continually buſied by your misfortune, its cauſe, and the enigmas wrapt up in Sir Charles's letter. On calculating times, and comparing circumſtances, little doubt remained with me of Lady Priſcilla's having been at work; but how, or how to be detected, was the queſtion.

Juſt as my affairs were tolerably ſettled, and I was preparing to fly to my Edmund, I read

in

in one of the newſpapers that—" the Right Hon. Lord Winterton lay at the point of death at his ſeat in Wales," It occurred to me, he might poſſibly have it in his power to give me ſome information, and that men of his lordſhip's caſt on their *death-beds* are often penitents, and anxious, when much miſchiefs no more in their power, to do the little good they can, with a view to atone the paſt.—Suppoſing the worſt—that ſome time—that a few days alone would be loſt, and for a poſſibility of ſucceſs well worth the hazard, I ſet off for ****** and found the miſerable man indeed expiring!

What a death-bed!—not one comfort to ſupport—no tender care to alleviate its pains—nor a hope to look forward to!—Poor Winterton! All, all thy vauntings—thy *life* thus to terminate! I did more than pity *him*, as I contemplated the *paſt* and the *preſent*—I felt for *myſelf:* and in revolving the former, that I have not been *quite* a *Winterton*, what an eſcape! Grandby—'twas thine!—and Amelia has yet to accompliſh what thou haſt begun!

Yet I didn't neglect one moment all that remained for my wretched companion of far other ſcenes—His attendance, his neceſſaries were ſcarcely decent: a ſhabby ſteward informed me there were not the *means*—all was involved, and there would be ſcarce enough left to bury him. He had written to the heir of his *titles*, and other relations, of his lord's imminent

imminent danger; but they were all diſtant branches, and having been ſtill more diſtant friends, no attention had yet been given.

Sally Moor (the laſt woman by whom he has had children) had been with him when firſt he came down; but finding his ſcheme of retrieving his fortunes had failed, ſhe upbraided his cowardly conduct, and hurried away, tho' he implored her not to leave him till his recovery from the ſevere cold he had caught in his flight from the fear of purſuing juſtice, when Amelia eſcaped, ſhould enable him better to ſpare her attendance. (His carriage had been overſet and broken on the Welſh mountains, Grandby; he was hurt, and had lain all night on the ſnow.) The ungrateful woman, who had ſo contributed to the ruin of his fortunes, now ſo little was left to glean of the wreck, refuſed him this poor favour.—But after, when ſhe learned his diſorder was proving mortal, daily gathering ſtrength as it had been from the want of proper care, and expoſed in a bleak mountainous ſituation to almoſt every blaſt his long-neglected manſion eaſily admitted; then, Grandby, the woman hurried thro' all the rigours of the ſeaſon down to Wales—to pay her laſt duties to the man that had ſo long, to his abſolute undoing, been attached to her?—The father of her children?—You'll ſuppoſe—no, my friend: but to rifle in his laſt moments the trifles yet about him; to ſtrip the tottering fabric of its

poor

poor remains, the remnants of its once gay trappings from its long mouldering walls—the few bits of plate which had eſcaped the pawnbroker's—and ſcraps of china that had yet outlived the wreck—theſe had been ſeized by the mercileſs harpy as her's and his children's *right*, (ere the creditors might claim them); or *him*, Grandby, they left to die as a lorn wretch with not one friend to cloſe his eyes; or a ſurvivor who might lament his loſs, or ever tell that ſuch a man *had been!*

Oh, Grandby! let me repeat what a laſt ſcene is here! If at beſt—if where the paſt *well liver*, while he can look up to Heaven, and ſay with confidence and hope—"I've done my beſt"—if even to him it's ſuch an awful ſcene, what muſt it be to ſuch whoſe conſciences can bear no retroſpect—who dare not to look forward! If yet terrible muſt be the painful couch of death, even while ſmooth'd by hands of conjugal or filial tenderneſs, whoſe pious tears the parting chriſtian tries to check by pointing to the ſkies, where once again they meet; how comfortleſs! how dark! how dredfual! the final hour of all, who, like Winterton, have lived—have died!

Could I forbear ſuch reflections now? Oh! they ruſh'd in torrents on me as I held the miſerable man I once had call'd my friend, and but for chance—or rather Heaven that gave me *you*, perhaps had yet reſembled, and might reſemble to the laſt.

The cordials now adminiſter'd, ſomewhat revived him—he ſeemed to recollect me, and far as his ſtrength allow'd, attempted to conceal himſelf beneath the clothes. In the moſt ſoothing manner, I convinced him of my good-will and forgiveneſs of the offence that, no doubt, was predominant in his mind.—I took his hand.—He could only then give me to know he comprehended my meaning, by a preſſure ſcarce preceptible.—I bade him truſt in Heaven—His groans at the ſound were then terribly audible indeed!—I ſaid all in my power to comfort—but intreated him as one proof of a ſincere repentance, that yet might ſway Almighty mercy to forgiveneſs, to ſay, whether he knew, or had ever heard of "any thing to Mr. Grandby's diſadvantage; "or if ſuch inſinuation had, thro' his, or any "other agency he was informed of, ever "been given to Sir Charles Eglington?" He bow'd his head twice as I ſpoke, and when I ſtopped, try'd to ſpeak, but could not—his lips only moved—"Was Lady Priſcilla (I "aſk'd) the perſon?" He then repeated after "me diſtinctly, Lady Priſcilla—and—and Grange."—He could no more, and in a few moments expired.

You recollect, Grandby, I acquainted you on firſt hearing poor Sophia's account of her perſecution from Grange, that he was one of the ſet of jolly blades (oh how I now bluſh as I write!) I then belong'd to—of *that ſet* you had

had hitherto ſo often warned me of in vain. —This affair, however, contributed to aid you—you, at my ſolicitation, and promiſe to break with them *ſome time or other*, allowed me to ſettle the matter with Grange.

Tho' a falſe point of honour, and engagement to abet—to forward each other's ſchemes all in our power, (good Heaven, Grandby!) induced me to ſhield him from your vengeance, I yet call'd him to ſevere account myſelf for ſo atrocious a proceeding, which I threatened to divulge, and have him expelled the ſociety for—for Grandby, this, believe me, far outdid our uſual outdoings, which (tho' bad enough) fell far ſhort of either this, or my Lord Winterton's attempt on Amelia.

Grange promiſed me on his honour to give over all thought of Sophia in future.—I after ſaw very little of him, and laſt heard he was completely done up, and ſkulking from his creditors. What therefore Winterton could mean by naming him to me with Lady Priſcilla, with whom I never heard he was acquainted, I could not conceive; I fear'd he was wandering, and might not in reſpect even to her be depended on; but, determined at all events to proceed, I only ſtaid to ſee the neglected remains of the laſt lineal deſcendant of the *ancient* and *noble* family of *Winterton* decently laid in earth; and then leaving the reſt to the execution already begun,

ſet off for Dover, only ſtaying to order my letters after me to Paris, and to write a haſty line to Sir Charles– intimating, that "flatter-"ing myſelf I was now in the way of merit-"ing the bleſt reward to which I had aſpired, "I hoped it would not be long ere I ſhould "throw myſelf at his feet, and claim it at his "hand." I embark'd for Calais, and immediately from thence purſued my rout to Paris.

Here I ſoon received my Lord Sedley's letter, and in ſucceſſion, your's—and as I ſaid before, their contents almoſt deprived me of the power to enjoy them. But tho' now regretting my having thus, thro' my own precipitation, loſt ſo much time from you—from my Amelia; and preparing without the leaſt delay to atone for it all I could by a return as expeditious, (for what cared I for, or wanted with Priſcilla now?) fortune that ever delights in making me her whirligig, has ſet me going here.

I was almoſt ſtepping into my poſt-chaiſe, when I was ſtopped by my Lord Elmour, who had juſt heard of me, and whom I believe with his lady at Montpelier. Notwithſtanding the Counteſs's perfect health, they had been juſt hurried to town ſome time ſooner than they intended by a letter he had received reſpecting Lady Priſcilla. I had determined, ere my Lord Sedley's letter render'd it unneceſſary, either by violence, or

arts

arts that ſhould equal even her own, to have forced her to confeſſion.—Here too I was once more prevented—ſhe had *confeſſed* already all her crimes—her added crimes—and this, Grandby, is Priſcilla's ſtory.

The pretended French Count, with whom ſhe had eloped, was none other than *Grange* himſelf, thus metamorphoſed, the better to ſucceed with a women whoſe foible he had learnt from his friend Winterton, who, when afraid to appear in perſon, deputed him his agent to recover from Lady Priſcilla the ſums paid for the ſale of my deceived Amelia! It had been from Grange his Lordſhip had received the intelligence of Sophia, tranſmitted to the fell women at her inſtigation, when bent on your deſtruction, in revenge for her ſlighted love—her neglected letters—or worſe—anſwer'd only by advice and intreaties to a change of conduct.

Whether Grange really believed you to be the identical Grandby he had known, returned from India, and certainly engaged to Sophia; or the brother, whoſe intended viſit he was informed of by the too credulous youth, and whom, thro' Mrs. Brown, he likewiſe deceived, yet remains a doubt—Which, or whatever *his* deſign, Lady Priſcilla and my Lord ſucceeded, but were both duped in turn by the deceiver himſelf.

He was by this time ruined; and ſuppoſing her ladyſhip in poſſeſſion of the three thou-

ſand in queſtion, altogether ready for a flight himſelf, he had only to equip his exterior a little more to the lady's taſte, and conſider her, after all he had learn'd, as lawful game, he but uſed Winterton's name as an introduction, and ſoon changing his coarſe Engliſh battery of *duns*, for the far more agreeable one of *amour è complement*, how could ſhe (hourly expecting a ſiege of another nature) but inſtantly yield at ſuch a criſis to a relief ſo tempting? Miſerable woman! And what has been the conſequence!

Grange ſoon knew, and deplored his error. —A French Count in Paris, without a livre in his pocket!—Yet a reſpite remained from detection; Lady Priſcilla had ſome jewels—thoſe were, under various pretences, obtain'd and ſold, or pawned; and till thoſe were exhauſted, his *lordſhip* daſh'd away, and ſupported his rank with ſpirit—but then?—Why then Mr. Grange took courage, and one morning addreſſing the lady, to her extreme ſurprize in her native tongue, he confeſſed the motive of his conduct; and, yet, ſupporting well his late character, he then gaily turn'd on his heel, and hummed to a tune of his own compoſing—"But 'twas on-"ly bite the biter—ha! ha! ha! And, wheeling away, left her to add what chorus ſhe pleaſed.

On the violent paſſions of Lady Priſcilla, you may ſuppoſe the effect of this conſummate impu-

impudence—revenge—deep revenge her favourite one, once more glow'd ſupreme in her boſom, but glow'd with added fires. And more to raiſe them, that very evening—but —(not to anticipate)—

The beautiful, tho' abandon'd woman, had ſome time been admired by a young officer of diſtinction, to whom ſhe had preferred Grange only on account of his imagined ſuperiority of rank and fortune; for the firſt was weak, docile, and *much in love.* To him ſhe inſtantly wrote theſe words—"Come this "moment, if you wiſh to find me in better "humour than on your laſt viſit—I have juſt "diſcarded your rival in a pet, for daring to "cenſure my partiality for you; and I have "half a mind he ſhall not be jealous for no-"thing." He came and availing himſelf of the lady's *happy humour*, a pretended note of *abſolute diſmiſſion* was diſpatch'd to Grange, whom the new lovers met that very evening at the opera, gallanting away a celebrated dancer ſuperbly adorned with part of thoſe very diamonds Lady Priſcilla had been deſpoil'd of, and which, having had a fortunate run at play, he had redeem'd, and preſented his fair dulcinea as a decoy to lure into his net thoſe ſhe before poſſeſſed.—In ſhort, with deſign (probably) to play over the ſame game with the ſame ſucceſs.

Lady Priſcilla ſaw—and ſcarce, tho' ſo train'd, could art conceal the fury in her

breaſt.—She laugh'd off the affair, however, to her inamorato, as an attempt to a *retort* on her conduct, by which the wretch affected to hide his chagrin, "tho' ſhe knew ſhe "ſhould have him whining at her feet in the "morning." Thus, Grandby, could ſhe act, while meditating ſuch miſchief.

As ſoon as ſhe got home, ſhe wrote a challenge in a feigned hand to Grange, as from her new favourite, appointing him to meet the chevalier by day-break, "to receive chaſ-"tiſement from his arm for the affronts he "had preſumed to offer the lady he adored; "and the poſſeſſion of whoſe charms he ne-"ver could deſerve until he had avenged "her." This was diſpatched to the dancer's lodgings, and there indeed it found him.

Oh Grandby! Could courage, or true ſpirit dwell with ſuch a mind as Grange poſſeſſed? What then am I to call it! for ſure throughout *this* affair he acted a manly part.—Were the inherent principles right? And were they by a courſe of a vitiated practice perverted? Or is this cuſtom of duelling but an hereditary or caſual virtue, which the villain—the coward may poſſeſs or acquire?—Certain, 'tis of Gothic extraction, and ever loſes ground as ſcience improves, and as manners refine. Some have attributed an attention to the latter, to the fear of provoking duels—I rather believe it only renders them unneceſſary! for if a *gentleman* cannot put up with *ill-language*,

is

is it poſſible a *gentleman* (I mean a man of breeding) can ever give it? And, tho' not in the preſent inſtance, we moſt generally find *words* the provocatives to fighting. Certain 'tis yet (if one at all) a *barbarous* virtue, indiſcriminately poſſeſſed or abhorred by the villain, the coward, the man of honour, or the hero.—And Grange inſtantly accepted the challenge, where Grandby (if Grandby could have provoked) had certainly declined it.

No ſooner did Lady Priſcilla receive an anſwer, (as they had finiſh'd their *petit ſoupè*) than ſhewing him the notes, ſhe gave full vent to her labouring rage; and revealing in her own way her wrongs, called loudly on his love to prove the confidence ſhe had repoſed in him a juſt one; and vow'd her attention to his paſſion depended on this hour. —Inſtigated byher wiles, the infatuated youth conſented—More—was ſway'd to conſent to her attending as his ſecond, "to witneſs at once "(ſhe ſaid) her triumph and revenge—the "bravery of her new, and fall of her late baſe "lover."—And (for the time approach'd) with eager ſpeed ſhe dreſs'd in a ſuit of his clothes, for the purpoſe.

They met—Both fired and miſs'd—Grange now politely addreſs'd his antagoniſt—"He "hoped he was ſatisfy'd."—The Chevalier bow'd, and appear'd to aſſent, but looking at his *ſecond* for his cue, the mad'ning wretch (as fearing a lack of full revenge) with a quick

pace advanced, and drawing a piſtol from her pocket, ere they could know her intention, ſhot him thro' the heart, crying out as he fell—"I—I alone know how to avenge my "wrongs."—Grange only could exclaim—"Lady Priſcilla!" and expired.

The aſtoniſhed Chevalier, and the gentleman who had attended the murdered man, ſtood mute—Lady Priſcilla, for the firſt time of her life, ſeemed ſhock'd at herſelf.—She gazed at the bleeding ſacrifice at her feet—ſtruck her forehead with violence and exclaimed—"Why this ſurpaſſes all that went "before!—Now all is finiſhed—now—now "Priſcilla look there, and triumph!"—but attempted not to leave the place. Her lover then, ſeeming to recollect her ſituation, would have led her off.—The other interpoſed; but no ſooner did he learn the murderer was a *woman*, than *French gallantry* conquering every other ſentiment, he bow'd ſubmiſſion; and the lady, apparently indifferent as to her fate, ſuffered herſelf to be carried away.

The Chevalier, tho' he declared himſelf from that fatal moment perfectly cured of his paſſion, yet acted from motives of compaſſion and honour.—He had been deceived, for he believed ſhe had loved Grange, and had been influenced by jealouſy alone to the infernal action.—I informed him of his error, and cured him likewiſe of his pity for a women, deſerving

ſerving of nothing but utter abhorence. He inſtantly conveyed her from Paris, and a note was diſpatched to her women to follow with all her lady's things the moment ſhe received it. Accordingly ſhe but ſtay'd to pack them up, and a packet from England in the interval arriving, ſhe brought and delivered it to Lady Priſcilla, who had kept a ſolemn ſilence (or rather a *ſtubborn* one) during the journey, which her companion was little diſpoſed to interrupt—His own thoughts on the probable conſequence of this barbarous affair, doubtleſs gave him ſufficient employ.

The letter was from her old emiſſary Howell—the late vile attendant of my beloved Amelia.—Here the wretch congratulates her ladyſhip on "her amended proſpects—"Fortune was no longer quite blind to merit "—tho' not altogether ſo propitious as ſhe "ought—Lord Winterton was no more to "be dreaded—his death at once freed her "from the returns he had ſolicited, and fears "of more diſcoveries.—Her revenge, how-"ever, on Mr. Grandby, and on the *preferred* "*ruſtic*, was not crown'd with deſerved ſuc-"ceſs—the firſt, after ſuffering ſome months "a total deprivation of his ſenſes, was now "perfectly reſtored, in conſequence of ſome "unlucky eclairciſſement which had regain-"ed him Miſs Eglington, and the yet high-"er favour of her family. Her ſiſter too, "who had ſo unfortunately infatuated the vile

"Love-

" Lovemore, was to reward the apoſtate
" with her hand, and both weddings would
" be celebrated ſhortly. But ſince the *coſmo-*
" *polite* would reſt for ever quiet with the
" death of Winterton, ſhe might bid them all
" defiance, and bleſs once more her native
" country with her preſence.—The family
" for Mr. Blomer's ſake, and Lovemore for
" his own, would leave her unmoleſted.—
" For her part—relying ſolely on her bounty,
" (ſince malice itſelf could not allege that
" any part of the intended plot had fail'd
" thro' her ill conduct) ſhe would depend on
" her ladyſhip's generoſity, and in future aſk
" nothing more than a continuance of that
" favour ſhe had ſo long enjoy'd, and would
" ever be proud of continuing to deſerve."

Lady Priſcilla read—for minutes ſhe could not ſpeak for the agony within her: her lips were convulſed—turn'd livid with the reſt of her features—her eyes ſometimes were fix'd, and ſometimes rolled with paſſion—and her trembling voice, when ſhe did ſpeak, ſeem'd alone to find utterance from rage.

" Very well! (exclaimed the tygreſs) very
" well!—All that had oppoſed the Egling-
" tons were doomed to deſtruction, while
" fortune ever ſupported their party. Fool!
" fool! (and ſhe flung down and trampled
" on the letter) is it ſo you congratulate me!
" —So—by telling me he *was* mad! Why
" hasn't he yet cauſe like me! And why
" can't

" can't I enjoy the ſight—And *ſhe regained!*
" *ſhe* happy while I am thus!—Amelia—
" Lovemore *happy* too; And I—Winterton
" —Grange—Ha! Grange! look—look! he
" yet lives—I'm not revenged!—No, no
" —there—there's the wound—he ſhows it,
" and grins with horror at the pain—and me!
" Let me alone—I will not go—away I ſay
" —I am afraid—forgive me—*Grandby* for-
" gives—but *you*—for God's ſake leave me!
" —Burn me not thus a live."

She then ſcream'd violently, and clung to a ſopha, as if to oppoſe being torn away.—In fine, my Grandby, (I tremble as I write) the judgement of Heaven ſmote her in the very part where ſhe had cauſed diſaſter to you—ſhe became a lunatic—good God! a *deſpairing* lunatic, and there are no hopes of her ever being otherwiſe.

The terrified Chevalier, thus thrown off his guard, could no longer think of either her ſafety or his own—He gather'd about him all his people, and phyſicians—prieſts were hourly called in—In her ravings all came to light—the murder—her treacherous conduct with regard to you—to Mira—Amelia—but the *murder* alone was underſtood. The body of Grange had been of courſe found, and proper enquiries ſet on foot—the diſmay'd Chevalier confeſſed the whole, and learning Lord Elmour had been heard to expreſs on her friend's account, a concern at Lady Priſcil-

la's

la's unworthy flight from them, he took the liberty of addreſſing his lordſhip on an affair ſo intricate:—" for that Lady Priſcilla was " either to be doom'd to *death* by the *laws*; " or by the *phyſicians* to a madhouſe for life; " and himſelf being then under arreſt, he " had but this moment to implore his aid in " behalf of the unfortunate Engliſh lady he " was no longer able to protect."

On receipt of this letter, the ever gracious Lady Elmour intreated her Lord's immediate interference for a women ſhe once had known—whoſe family ſhe ever reſpected, and whoſe huſband particularly demanded all her compaſſion.—They haſten'd to town—My lord exerted all the intereſt he either poſſeſſed, or could collect, to ſuſpend the deciſion, (for 'twas alleged the madneſs was feign'd to gain time) and 'twas at this criſis, that hearing of my being in Paris, he deſired my aid in conjunction with the reſt of his friends, to obtain a leſs rigorous ſentence than the decree then in agitation.

But to ſee the miſerable woman, and an inſtant to doubt her madneſs, would argue equal derangement—Yet we have had infinite trouble—the *premeditated* plot—the *prepared* piſtol—the apparent collected *malice* throughout the whole—theſe were difficult points to overcome by an aſſertion, however proved, of inſtantaneous delirium ſucceeding ſo artful—ſo wily a conduct. At length (if I may

may deem it a leſſer evil) ſhe was ſnatch'd from impending death, to ſuffer perpetual impriſonment in a houſe for lunatics.—There, Grandby, is Lady Priſcilla now immured *for life*.—And the God of Mercies forgive, and let this atone for even *her* crimes!

I wrote, tho' I could foreſee your horror—your tears of compaſſion too—your Mira's, and moſt, my poor Amelia's for her once-loved companion and friend! *Yet I would write*, that when I behold you again, no ſubject like *this* might caſt a gloom over thoſe, that but now to anticipate, throws a gleam on my breaſt, and lifts off the weight this account had impreſſed.

We ſhall immediately depart—*we* I ſay, for Lady Elmour has ſo ſeverely felt this ſhocking cataſtrophe, that ſhe determines to fly the ſcene of its dreaded perpetration. England, and the loved friends it contains, will now open upon us anew; and with added ſtores of happineſs and joy, receive us to their arms!

LETTER XCIII.

Mrs. Boothby to Miſs Eglington.

NOW, my dear Mira, I have ever heard 'twas dangerous to interfere between man and wife; and here had your poor friend

friend like to have been conſumed herſelf, while trying to extinguiſh matrimonial fires. After all, 'twas more ſmoke than flame—but catch me to endanger ſcorching my fingers again, by meddling with ſuch combuſtibles!

Sir William came to me (his ſupreme council) yeſterday morning, for advice *quickly* in an unforſeen emergency.—He had juſt received a *challenge*, Mira, from the *indifferent* Mr. Townley. I was drawing in my horns at the terrific ſound at firſt; but recollecting thoſe amazing feats of pop-work are generally after all but mere flaſhes in the pan; "Who's "afraid? (ſaid I) we will proceed."

"Proceed!" (cry'd Barville) I could ſcarce refrain from flying to hug the dear fellow for his pains, and diſcover the whole, but would not without firſt conſulting you.

"You did well—you ſhall fight Sir Wil-"liam, I think—and Kenſington Gardens "ſhall be the ſcene of action."

"Fight, madam!—Kenſington Gardens! "What do you mean?"

"Nay, that I can ſcarcely tell myſelf, ſo "don't be impatient.—Pray who's Mr. "Townley's ſecond on this tremendous bu-"ſineſs?"

"I know not—a note was left at my "houſe—he might not then have decided "on the perſon."

I diſpatch'd Barville to make what enquiries he could on this principal branch of the buſineſs,

buſineſs, and to write his aſſent to the meſſage; and lo! while deliberating "things ne-"ver known before," who ſhould appear apropos to aſſiſt at my elbow, but—Sir George Lovemore! the very man I wanted, Mira.—To be ſure, he check'd my ardour for *duels* a little, by the recital of his late *Pariſian* adventure. Oh that Priſcilla! Could nothing elſe conquer her ferocious temper! or ſtay her fatal hand, dealing deſtruction around her wherever ſhe apppear'd!—Her very name throws me in a cold ſweat—So, as I ſay—this account cool'd my courage—but too late: Barville by this had return'd his anſwer, and Townley was doubtleſs loading away.

Sir George and I were prepared to be old friends, tho' but new acquaintances. He obligingly came to let me know of my Lady Elmour's ſafe arrival in the kingdom, tho' ſhe had not yet reach'd the metropolis.—"She had allow'd for his impatience, and "permitted his haſte to Eglington Hall, to "which place he would be happy to take "my commands."—Don't tell Amelia for your life—I had the cruelty to ſtop his career half a dozen hours at leaſt, and to oblige him to take my *commands* another way for the preſent.—In ſhort, I made no difficulty, now he was *one of us*, to open to him all my manœuvres. I beſpoke his alliance; and, tho' he look d a little blank at this new delay, engaged him warmly in my cauſe and ſucceſs.

He

He directly paid Mr. Townley a viſit—was at firſt refuſed admittance; but while wording a ſecond meſſage to *inſiſt* on ſeeing his *dear old friend*, another ſervant (on Townley's ſecond thoughts) was diſpatched to reſerve his denial, and to intreat Sir George's preſence.

Well—he found him *his old friend* indeed, as glum—as agitated too, or more ſo than ever.—He begg'd to know the cauſe of his evident uneaſineſs—declared himſelf ready to aſſiſt in removing it all in his power, and inſiſted on knowing how he beſt ſhould ſerve him.

Townley wonder'd much how his friend ſhould diſcern what he believed he ſo well had concealed, and vowing "his profeſſions "were timely indeed to a moment, for that "he had been at a loſs whom to intruſt;' diſplay'd his wounds, and intreated his attendance to the field of battle, where he hoped to avenge them all—"for Sir George Lovemore, "I would have you—that is, I would have "every one to know, while I have an arm to "defend my own honour, no man alive ſhall "dare inſult it with impunity."

Sir George commended his reſolution, and as a proof he did ſo, left him to adjuſt every thing with Mr. Boothby, (Sir William's ſecond) and attended him as his, at the appointed time to a certain retired ſpot in Kenſington Gardens, where (preferring Hyde-Park)

Townley

Townley was, after ſome difficulty, perſuaded to meet his antagoniſt.

Behold the doughty combatants met—every thing adjuſted, and (for I had not been idle) at a given ſignal, juſt as the elevated arm is levelling the ball wing'd with death—juſt at that fatal moment, behold (I ſay) the maddening *wives* ruſhing from the adjoining thicket, and with ear-piercing ſhrieks, each covering with her ſnowy arms the otherwiſe devoted huſband! and, ſtrange power, Mira, of conjugal love!—in vain were the triggers pulled—and pulled—in vain were the ſuccouring aids of HONOUR—REVENGE—DEFENCE, and other *high-ſounding* words now invoked.—I tell you, Hymen and Juno had heard the fair ones' piteous cries; and, at their inſtant bidding, little Cupid ſnatch'd off the balls, and blew away the powder without even ſcorching his plumes.—Such miracle-working effect, Mira, *true love, pure chaſtity*, and all the *conjugal virtues* poſſeſs—wherever they happen to appear!

To be ſure, we had ſad work after though—and I was in the beginning afraid all this pretty machinery had gone to wreck, and poor I had been hurled along with it, and the other attending deities, into the canal, for all our trouble and kind interference.—That ſavage, Townley, abſolutely daſh'd from the ungrateful boſom which, but for her, had perhaps now been bleeding, the beauty favoured by Hymen himſelf!—So, inſtead of revenging

venging the inſult like a women—any thing elſe I ſhould rather ſay—for like a *true woman* ſhe turn'd upon me, and ſo be-rated and reproach'd me for "ſetting her this *diſguſting* taſk " —for planning this *deceptive* work, that " had loſt her the heart and confidence of her " adored huſband, and nearly his life too." The little ſoul, Mira, had in her terror quite loſt ſight of our *plot*; as I had only promiſed her and Lady Helena the ſight of ſomething *very extraordinary*, would they meet me in ſuch a ſpot, at ſuch a time, they were neither of them prepared for like entertainment; ſo Mrs. Townley, believing this tragic concluſion but the natural effect of foregoing events, now broke in upon the drama, diſcover'd my *plot*, and left me near the winding up of the piece at the mercy of one of of my heroes, ere brought to proper conviction, tho' for her I had attempted the arduous taſk!

Well—I now returned from the *weak girl*, the *fond wife*, to my other *ſuffering character*; and from the *ſteady man*, the *affronted huſband*, expected a firmer conduct.—No, believe me!—for no ſooner did Sir William behold his Helena almoſt expiring in his arms with terror, bereft of all her lofty airs —her ſunk features—her emaciated frame (by the bye, Mira, ſhe has been far worſe than I believed—has really ſuffer'd more, or as much as ſhe deſerved) too well evincing the full effect of his ſuppoſed delinquency,

than

than dying with agony at the ſight, the relenting ſwain would likewiſe have excuſed his cruelty by throwing the odium on me.—And now ſee me, for all my pains and ſervices, bandied between two ingrates, till the walks—the woods—the rocks—the very canals reſounded—"'Twas Mrs. Boothby—indeed 'twas "all Mrs. Boothby's doings"—While the liſtening birds, and every flowery ſhrub fled, and hung down their heads at ſuch malicious perfidy.—What could I do, but make a *ſpeech*, ere my intended flight from the apprehenſion of becoming the full ſacrifice to the reconciliation threaten'd from the unbent features of the huſband, by quick degrees changing to returning love, and placid ſmiles? And the reviving form and delighted eyes of the *wife*, as both liſten'd to the *pleaſing tale*, the *happy explanation* that at length relieved them from the weights ſo long at their hearts?

"Yes, yes, (I cried) I ſee how it is, and "how I am to fare for the reward of my la-"bours. And pray now what have I done, "but try'd to pleaſe you all to the full extent "of your wiſhes? Mr. Townley's ſupreme en-"joyment was fixed in being thought a faſhi-"onable huſband—I ſaw his lady could ne-"ver ſucceed as a modiſh wife, and the "moſt I could do for him was to induce her "to feign, what I now ſee ſhe was never "born to ſupport, even in *appearance*; and

"then

" then by a *duel* in *ſtyle*, to convince the
" world Mr. Townley had every reaſon to
" think himſelf happy in his wife's indiffe-
" rence, if not in his own. For her—ſhe
" wanted to cure the man ſhe loved of a paſ-
" ſion which ſhe in *ſimple ruſticity* deemed a
" ſtrange one; what then ſo likely to do as
" to let a *duel* publiſh a ſame, which when
" once eſtabliſhed, he would grow careleſs
" of ſupporting longer—for had not Mr.
" Townley been proved a *faſhionable huſband?*
" —then what occaſion for more? He might
" now toſs up his head 'in defiance of fools,
" without any fear of cenſure'—and love
" his wife as much as he pleaſed.

" You, Sir William Barville, began to
" lower and to threaten rebellion in down-
" right earneſt, and I ſaw were meditating
" happy times, (not yet indeed in your pow-
" er to reach) when your caſt-off chains
" ſhould no longer gall your ſtruggling neck
" —Yet you loved—yet you wiſh'd to pleaſe
" Helena;—and, while aiding in thoſe of
" your friend, Mr. Townley, I only intended
" your lady ſhould reap each wiſh of her
" own; and moſt, madam, (turning to her)
" I have had it in my power to accompliſh
" your's.—If not that of *actual* '*madneſs*,'
" I procured you the ſight of the 'man you lov-
" ed' in the way to 'death' at leaſt.—Well did
" your ladyſhip ſuſtain the envied proſpect!—
" you deſigned to 'leave him'—to 'part with Sir
" William for ever'—and equally well have

" you

" you proved your power to do ſo!—True, I " have not been able to fulfil the whole of " your expectations—Mrs. Townley began; " and after each of you contribute to throw " the ſcene into utter confuſion, you all com- " bine to hoot the poor author off the ſtage; " —and now—what have I to do but humbly " make my exit?"

Oh dear contradiction!—They would not let me go, Mira: all clung about the now " dear Mrs. Boothby;" and each penitent would have ſaid more (for I ſaw candour beam in their eyes) but for the check of Sir George Lovemore's preſence—a ſtranger!—at leaſt 'twas *ſuppoſed* to their pretty diſſentions—and when the ſubſiding buſtle allow'd recollection, how Mrs. Townley's cheeks out-bluſh'd the Kenſington roſes! Nor was ſhe alone diſconcerted—Sir George perceived the general embaraſſment, and the moſt charming fellow in the world (except one) ſoon diſſipated all remains of diſcontent, by beſeeching each couple only to defer a few days their intended plan of reform, as he would notwithſtanding their inferences from a few late unpromiſing appearances, ſoon ſet them a *pattern* of matrimonial conduct and felicity, which, while its example would benefit them, would want only their friendſhip to render compleat.

I propoſed leading off my bands in triumph to Groſvenor-ſquare, to ſettle preliminaries over

over the breakfaſt table, where, tho' your Helena's meditating look had not yet given way to her ever-playful graces, I had the heart-felt ſatisfaction of ſeeing her once more in the way of being happy with a man who truly deſerves to be ſo himſelf; and to hear Mr. Townley declare "that falſe ideas of "*faſhion* and *ſhame* ſhould not ſteal from his "future hours one moment more of that fe-"licity they alone had ever been able to "cloud."

May their late ſmarts and terrors be only remember'd amid their expected joys, as a beacon to warn them from errors that might, with all their merits and worth, have blaſted them all.—Haſten Mira—Grandby,—'tis your's to give them *examples* indeed! not that my (however ſomething leſs perfect) next ſucceeding couple to the temple of Hymen, will be in the leaſt wanting in theirs;—no:—Sir George and Amelia will, *in their way*, be equally bleſt.

I can tell you there are wagers depending on the ſubject: I betted this morning on *Mira for ever!*—Each of the gentlemen for their own ladies, and Mr. Boothby back'd Sir George in favour of his ſtill-preferred Amelia—Oh! may the ſweet conteſt ſtill be undecided, or like the race (if yet there is ſuch a one) where each ſhall win the prize!

LETTER

LETTER XCIV.

Lady Eglington to Mrs. Boothby.

COME once more my friend—come in happier times to Eglington-Hall, and ſee the mother now! Every care—every apprehenſion fled; I ſee my *twin cherubs* both—both happy—both *deſerving* to be ſo; and how ſhall I contain my exulting ſoul! Was not *this* the conſtant wiſh of my life? And this, (after a proper *education*—after *preparing* the mind for ſuperior duties) was not this the moment I looked to, as the one that eſtabliſhing well the way thro' life, was to lead by degrees to bleſſings eternal? Then ſee my hope fulfilled; for tho' the ſhades of life intervene—tho' once I was tempted to aſk, "why, "ſince Amelia's education had rendered her "wretched; a *Mira's* had not been ſucceſs-"fully crowned by merited fortune?" At laſt I behold error early imbibed in the one yield, firſt to the rod of correcting affliction, and then to better example; in the other—diſappointment but trying a virtue ſo pure to the end, that Heaven approving ſeems to ſay its brightneſs ſhall reflect happineſs too, on whom ever it ſhines!

Amiable, accompliſhed youths! I have them both, Mrs. Boothby—Sir George is arrived—he found his Amelia (as he judged)

greatly ſhocked and affected at the awful exit of a companion ſo valued once, and whom ſhe then believed it perfection to emulate: poor innocent!

Never, my deareſt friend, with all my wiſhes for the full enjoyment of their moſt perfect happineſs, may the hearts of my ſweet girls be ſhut to the woes of others! Still may this allay prove they beſt deſerve the ſmiles of Heaven themſelves, while moſt they feel its frown on thoſe whom leſs its favours!

Mira too, notwithſtanding your preparatory letter, was ſtill anxious for her friend—Sir George quieted her fears, and when it came, ſhe could enjoy the concluding ſcene of your "farce," which I moſt ſincerely hope may have all the effect you deſigned.

I did not ſee the firſt interview between our Grandby and his noble, diſintereſted friend, but can well conceive what it muſt have been, from their continued behaviour to each other:—ſuch animated affection; enthuſiaſtic regard; and ſo lively a gratitude, are well worthy the breaſts they fill.

But let me not delay a moment longer telling you, a letter to his brother, has announced the arrival of young Grandby in the Downs—he is hourly expected: Sophia is half wild with her joy, and ſays, tho' ſhe wiſhed not Mr. Grange's crimes ſo ſevere puniſhment,

niſhment, ſhe is not ſorry Heaven has intervened to prevent all apprehenſion of harm to her *huſband indeed*, as he now will be, on that unhappy wretch's account.

Mr. Williams has ſettled a handſome annuity on the good Mrs. O'Shaughneſſy; if ſhe prefers being near Sophia and "her darling pet," 'twill be left at her option to live with her, or in a neat little farm adjoining.

Neither has Diana been forgotten—Such worth, and attachment to ſuffering merit from ſimple virtue, Heaven only can *in full* reward.

Well—but you aſk me—"What about "Mira?—Amelia? Is every thing fixed? "When am I to come?" *Immediately* my friend—all is prepared—the *heart* has long been ready, and when Heaven allows, ſhall *ceremonials* intervene to delay its triumph now!

Expecting Sir George would leave town on Saturday, Mr. Grandby the day after ſet off to meet and conduct him to Eglington-Hall—to Amelia! and yeſterday both arrived. My heart was expanded—the ſcene like the ſeaſon, glowed before me; joy, in vain repreſſed by modeſty, ſprung from the cheeks of my bluſhing girls: Sir Charles ſeemed treading in air! The pride of his life was his daughters—their happineſs his firſt wiſh on earth—or to be ſuperceded by honour alone. Both were now combined: for he could now

bid them open all their hearts to receive the youths, even THEY might ſcarcely deſerve. Could I be otherwiſe than extacy itſelf! And I became fanciful to—for I ordered the beautiful Temple at the entrance of the Park to be gaily hung with feſtoons compoſed of every flower and fruit of the ſpring; and there the exulting parents; with the lovely twins between them (alike dreſſed, and beaming like Aurora at the approach of the ſun,) awaited the coming friends. They appeared; and preventing all their ardent looks prepared us to expect, Sir Charles with a warmth ſcarcely yielding to their's, met them —a daughter in either hand;—and as the graceful youths kneeled before them, enraptured cry'd——

" Take them, my friends! and if love,
" with all it has to promiſe, can reward your
" virtues, receive it here! My daughters—I
" ſhall ſtill have *one* wiſh remaining till *you*
" *fulfil* my engagements—till you give me to
" ſee Heaven crown the union your hearts
" have long preferred—Enough of delays have
" your lovers ſuffer'd—the cauſe would now
" be your's, and we are all *prepared* to be hap-
" py. This auſpicious day that firſt brings *you*
" *together* be ſtill marked—Be this day week
" —Be next *Monday* the day, when the Al-
" mighty will ſmile on a parent's prayer, and
" I ſhall bleſs my ſons—my daughters; all
" equally the childern of my love!"

They

They likewiſe kneeled as their father ſpoke —They wept too—but their tears were not of ſorrow—They fell on their burning cheeks as the dews of Heaven on a beauteous roſe, expoſed to too warm a ſun.

Their ſilence yielding conſent to their parent's wiſh, the overjoy'd lovers claſped them to their full hearts—Could our feelings at that moment be deſcribed! Oh, Mrs. Boothby! If any *earthly*, can reach the idea of *immortal* glory, it muſt be that parents alone can experience, when they behold an adored daughter, for whoſe every good they long have trembled, ſafe in the arms of a man they know will render her happy!

Such is now our hope—and, with Heaven's bleſſing, ſo well founded a one, that whenever that Heaven ſhall call us hence, we may fully enjoy its opening proſpect; ſecure that the loved orphans, for whom we might otherwiſe wiſh its protraction, we leave in equally tender protection.

Did I not ſay, however bright our day, the ſhades of life would intervene?——Scarce had the firſt tumults of mutual pleaſure on this happy interview began to ſubſide, when Grandby received a letter from poor Mr. Blomer.—He had heard, in his little retirement, of his wife's every proceeding in Paris, from a friend he employed to watch her—"leſt *want*, he might yet redreſs, ſhould purſue

ſue her undoing." He adds,——" already " borne down by a weight of ſorrows, " this laſt ſtroke had far leſs to ac- " compliſh than needed—His heart was " quite broke—and warned by his phyſicians " to haſten, his child was all that remained. " Would Mr. Grandby ALL HIMSELF forget " the *mother*; and while he took to his pro- " tection the remnants of his poor little " orphan's fortunes, allow of his Mira's care " of her perſon?—Thus only could he die " in peace—for thus only might he hope his " daughter would eſcape the contagion from " erroneous female tuition, ſo fatal to *her*, " whom, but for that, he might ſtill have " called his own!"

Don't your heart bleed for the worthy Blomer? My ſweet girls were equally ſolicitous about the orphan babe. Grandby needed not the ſpeaking eloquence of his Mira's eyes to invite his acceptance of the taſk—He inſtantly wrote, and engaged for himſelf——Mira added her aſſurance of all in her power; and Heaven compoſe the parting ſufferer!

Erroneous tuition indeed! and lo! the effects of EDUCATION, not only in THE TWIN SISTERS, but in many of our late connections! When firſt on your Emma's account I gave you, at your deſire, ſome idea of my manner and hopes with reſpect to the one, and of my doubts and fears for the other; little

little did I imagine the firſt would need all our cares had taught, to ſupport her ſucceeding trials! or that a more dreadful inſtance in Lady Priſcilla would render the errors of the ſecond (ſnatch'd away as ſhe was, in happy time) an unneceſſary example.

Come then—and ſhare my unbounded joy; that Mira no longer proves ſhe knows to ſuſtain adverſity; and that Amelia now deſerves to be happy!

FINIS.

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